HAPPY MERCHANDISE

OR

WISDOMS

Excellency darkly discovered,

OR

Rather greatly obscured by Words without knowledge

By CHARLES PHELPES.

WISDOME is better then Rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. *Proverb.* 8. 11.

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THe great deſigne of men generally is to exerciſe themſelves unto that which may be gainfull, and profitable unto them, and to that end many men take a great deale of paines, and weary themſelves, and adventure themſelves into many dangers, that they may increaſe to themſelves: and becauſe their Wiſdome is folishneſs, and their knowledge bruitishneſs, therefore they labour for ſuch riches as will not truly inrich them nor make them happy in the account of God, if they finde the life of their hands; and for ſuch alſo as are uncertaine both as to the getting and keeping, *Prov.* 23. 4.5. Now then, that the Ho: Ghoſt may take us off from labouring for that which will not ſatisfy, he here commends to us a better, and indu-

ring ſubſtance. Which is of infinite and eternall worth and value, that we might not for lying vanities forſake our owne mercies: And commendeth to us the excellency of the Merchandiſe it ſelfe, or way of getting it: That we might labour, not for that meat which perished, but for this which indureth unto everlaſting life, which the ſon of man will give unto us. O that we may all ſo conſiderer it, that, ceaſing from our owne Wiſdome, we may get Wiſdome, this Wiſdome of God, which is the principall thing, and with all our gettings get underſtanding, that we may, at laſt, inherit glory, when ſhame ſhall be the promotion of fooles.

Pro-

Proverb. 3. 13, 14. *Happy [is] the man that findeth Wiſdome, and the man that getteth (or draweth out) underſtanding: For the Merchandiſe of it is better then the Merchandiſe of ſilver; and the gaine thereof then fine gold.*

THis Booke of the Proverbs of Salomon though in many places thereof, it ſeemeth not to have ſuch dependance and connexion as other places of the ſcripture of truth, yet is fitly diſpoſed; and the Proverbs therein are orderly placed, for becauſe the preacher was wiſe. He gave good heed, and ſought out, and ſet in order many Proverbs, *Eccleſ.* 12. 9. yea indeed theſe words of the wiſe, though ſpoken by Salomon, yet came not by his will, but he ſpoke as he was moved by the Ho: Ghoſt. 2 *Petr.* 1. 20, 21. and they are all given from one shepherd, even from Jeſus Chriſt, the great shepherd of the sheep, and God in him *Eccleſ.* 12. 9. 11. Who is the God of order, and not of confuſion. And therefore if we ſee not that wiſe order and diſpoſing of them, its meet for us to take shame to our ſelves, and judge our ſelves: and to cry to him who putteth Wiſdome into the inward parts, and giveth underſtanding to the heart, to teach us what we ſee not: and to open our eyes to behold wondrous thing out of his law, *Job* 38. 36. and 34. 31, 32.

And the Principall end of writing the Proverbs, was, to know Wiſdome, to make it knowne, and that we might know it, and know that it is the principall thing *Prov.* 1. 1, 2. and 4. 7. and there fore in the

nine firſt chapters of it, there is a large commendation of Wiſdome, and declaration, and diſcovery of its excellency, with manifold intimations that we may be made partakers of it; and directions how we may finde, and get it; and there fore many invitations to get it; and affirmations, and demonſtrations of the bleſſedneſs of him that hath, and retaineth it; and of the miſery, and wretchedneſs of him that refuſeth it: with many warnings and cautions to take heed of the evill man and woman, even of all evill perſons and ſpirits, who would hinder us, or call us off from ſeeking it, that we might have fellowship with them in eating of their bread of deceit, and in their unfruitfull workes of darkneſs: all which words of the wiſe are pleaſant and profitable. For this holy man, as directed by that one shepherd, ſought to finde out acceptable words, words of delight; and that which was Written was upright, even words of truth. And theſe words of the wiſe are as goads, to pricke and provoke us, that whe may not be ſlothfull, but diligent followers after Wiſdome: and as nailes faſtened by the maſters of aſſemblies (in a ſure place) which are given from one shepherd; upon which we may leane and depend; and have our truſt in the Lord according to them; that our faith may not ſtand in the Wiſdome of men, but in the power of God *Eccleſ.* 12. 10, 11.

And theſe words we have propoſed to conſiderer, and ſpeak unto, are added to that inſtruction ſet downe, ℣ſ. 11. 12. *My ſon, deſpiſe not the chaſtening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction*; or faint not when thou art rebuked of him, *Hebr.* 12. 5. for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth &c. To ſignify *to us*, either.

1. That the end of God in all his chaſtenings and corrections of us, while it is the day of his grace and patience, is to drive out of us that foolishneſs that is bound

bound up in our hearts, *Prov.* 22. 15. and to awaken us, and ingage us to apply our hearts to Wiſdome, *Pſal.* 90. 7, 12. for the rod and reproofe give Wiſdome, *Prov.* 29. 15. he doth not correct and chaſten us for his pleaſure ſimply, but for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holineſs, even of Chriſt, who is made Wiſdome, and righteouſneſs, and holineſs &c. *Hebr.* 12. 5, 10. *Lament.* 3. 33. and therefore it is unſeemly for us to deſpiſe, and ſet light by Gods chaſtenings, or faint when rebuked of him; becauſe he hath ſuch a gracious end therein, that we might ſeek, and finde Wiſdome, and apply our hearts to Gods underſtanding. Or.

2. He doth hereby direct us unto, and commend unto us, that excellent meanes, and thing, where by we may be helped and ſtrengthned neither to deſpiſe Gods chaſtenings, nor faint when he rebuketh us, namely, this ſound Wiſdome and underſtanding, which is profitable in and under all afflictions, and unto all things to direct us, *Eccleſ.* 10. 10. and ſo it is as if he ſhould ſay: that you may behave your ſelves comely, and laudably under Gods afflicting hand, ſo as not to erre on the one hand, or on the other, needfull it is to get Wiſdome, and an happy man he is that getteth underſtanding. For this will ſhew unto us, that he never correcteth but when our need requires it, and to ſeale our inſtruction: that we might not ſet light by his chaſtenings: and this acquaints us with his grace in Chriſt, and gracious end and intention in all his debatings with us, that we might not be weary, or faint in our mindes: for it is out of love, and for our good that he taketh this paines with us, and is now judging of us and this conſidered, is proper and powerfull to teach and helpe us to rejoyce in the tribulations he is ordering. Hence when the Apoſtle James exhorteth, and inſtructs the beleivers, to count it all joy

when they fall into divers temptations &c. he addes, *if any of you lack Wiſdome let him ask of God, Jām.* 1. 2, 5. intimating to us, that Wiſdome will inſtruct, and ſtrengthen us to carry our ſelves evenly under trialls and temptations, and helpe us to rejoyce in that which ſeemeth to be greivous ſo the Apoſtle, to the end the coloſſians might be ſtrengthned to all patience, and long ſuffering with joyfullneſs, prayeth, that they might be filled with the knowledge of Gods will in all Wiſdome and ſpirituall underſtanding, that they might Walk worthy of the Lord in all conditions, unto all pleaſing, *Coloſ.* 1. 9, 11. this Wiſdome will help us to judge well of God at all times, and of his dealings with us when he writes bitter things againſt us: needfull therefore it is that we ſeeke and ſearch for this that we may not ſleight, nor ſinke under the corrections he is ordering. Or.

3. He addeth this affirmation of the happineſs of the man that findeth Wiſdome, &c. after the former admonition, to ſignify to us, that now when Gods hand is lifted up, and he is judging us, it is high time to awake out of ſleep, and to ſeek after this moſt excellent thing, that it may be well with us: it is good, profitable, and needfull at all times to get Wiſdome; but then eſpecially ſo when his judgments are amongſt us, and upon us: for if the preſent opportunity be neglected, we may be deprived of another; and to the end we may be kept from evill both now and for ever, hence the Apoſtle inſtructeth the beleivers to redeeme the time from this motive, becauſe the dayes are evill; ſinfull, and full of afflictions, and judgments: wherefore, ſaith he, *be ye not unwiſe but underſtanding. What the will of the Lord is Epheſ.* 5. 15-17. So when Moſes the man of God had been declaring and bewailing the manifold afflictions himſelfe and the people were under, ſaying, we are conſumed by thine

thine anger, and by thy wrath we are troubled, thou haſt ſet our ſins before thee, our ſecret ſins in the light of thy countenance, &c. He then prayeth, *ſo teach us to number our dayes, that we may apply our hearts to Wiſdome*, ſignifying to us thereby, that now eſpecially our hearts should beſtirred up, and provoked to turne from our iniquities, and underſtand his truth; and to take faſt hold of inſtruction, and not let her goe, to keep her for she is our life, *Pſal.* 90. 7, 12. *Daniell* 9. 13. Or.

4. He now sheweth unto us wherein happineſs conſiſteth, and who is the happy man, to wit, he that findeth Wiſdome, that this may be a comfort to us in all our afflictions, and in and under all Gods corrections, and rebukes, be they never ſo heavy and grievous, and though there by God should ſtrip us naked and bare, and take away from us all this Worlds good, and we should be rendred amongſt men miſerable, wretched creatures, and looked upon as moſt unhappy perſons; yet this one thing, even Wiſdome, will render us truly happy, and bleſſed in the account of him that judgeth righteouſly, and of thoſe that are taught of him. *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, ô Lord, and teacheſt him out of thy law, Pſal.* 94. 11, 12. Men in their vaine thoughts thinke, that they are accurſed and miſerable ones whom God chaſteneth, tough there by he give them Wiſdome; but their thoughts are vaine and foolish: ſuch is the excellency of this heavenly Wiſdome and underſtanding, as that it alone will make them truly happy that have it, though God in and by his judgments and corrections should ſo impoverish them as that they should be as poore as was Chriſt, who had not where on to lay his head: and ſuchalone is its excellency, as that though a man should gaine the whole World, and be without this pearle of great price, he would be a poore, miſerable,

ſerable, pitteous creature. This is good for us now to conſider, when God is pleading with us in rebukes in our nation generally, by manifold afflictions and judgments, and in great decay of trading: when men are minished and brought low thorow oppreſſion, affliction and ſorrow, and God is ſtaining the pride of our glory; yet this is a pearle of ſuch great price and worth, that it will indeed render happy, , and truly inrich them that have and retaine it, though they should be naked, and deſtitute of daily food: Oh! that it were ſo conſidered by us, that we might with fervency ſeeke it, and give no ſleep to our eyes, nor ſlumber to our eye-lidds till we finde it; and that for the ſake thereof, we might count all other things but loſs and dung, that we might win, and be made partakers of it.

In the words themſelves we have.

1. An affirmation of the happineſs of the man that findeth Wiſdome, and of the man that getteth underſtanding, ỳſ. 13.

2. A Generall Demonſtration, and evidence of the happineſs of ſuch a man, and a commendation of the exerciſe it ſelfe, laid downe as a Motive, and argument to ingage us to ſeeke, that we may finde and get it, ỳſ. 14.

1. An affirmation of the happineſs of the man that findeth Wiſdome, and getteth (or draweth out) underſtanding, ỳſ. 13.

In which affirmation, we shall, God aſſiſting.

1. Speak ſome what by way of explication.

2. Note ſome inſtructions contained in this Affirmation.

1. By way of explication, and opening, we shal inquire into, and conſider theſe two things which are needfull to be knowne by us.

1. What is this Wiſdome and underſtanding here commended to us? 2. What

2. What is this finding and getting it?

1. What is this Wiſdome, and underſtanding here commended to us.

To that we may ſay, that by both expreſſions one and the ſame thing may be meant, and ſignified, as appeareth, in that the Demonſtration and motive is ſo ſet downe as to include and containe both in one word: As, the Merchandiſe of it, namely, of Wiſdome and underſtanding is better then the Merchandiſe of ſilver, and the gaine thereof, as before, then fine gold she (ſpeaking of both as of one perſon) is more precious then Rubies, &c. ſo Chap. 4. 5, 9. and 8. 1,4. and by this Wiſdome and underſtanding is not meant ours, that which we have naturally in us, or that which we may attaine unto by art, or by our owne labour and induſtry: and ſo it is not the Wiſdome of this World, or of the princes of this World, not humane learning, nor the arts and ſciences of this World, ſuch as Rhetorick, Logick, Philoſophy, which are ſcience falſly ſo called: and which, though in high eſteeme among men yet, will not render a man happy: nay thoſe that had no other Wiſdome came to nought, 1 *Corinth.* 2. 6. He who here commendeth to us this Wiſdome and underſtanding, warneth, and admoniſheth us elſewhere to ceaſe from our owne Wiſdome, *Prov.* 23. 4. and not to leane to our owne underſtanding, *Prov.* 3. 5. and to beware of Philoſophy, and vaine deceit, &c. *Coloſ.* 2. 8. and telleth ſome, that their Wiſdome and knowledge had perverted them, *Iſay.* 47. 10. and it is his purpoſe to deſtroy the Wiſdome of the wiſe, and to bring to nought the underſtanding of the prudent, and them that leane to and rely on it 1 *Corinth.* 1. 19, 21. and 2. 6. and thoſe led of God came not with excellency of ſpeech, or of Wiſdome, declaring the teſtimony of God; for the Wiſdome of words maketh the croſs of Chriſt of none

effect,

effect, 1 *Corinth.* 2. 1. and 1. 17. this Wiſdome is foolishneſs with God, and it is ſo farre from helping us to underſtand, and know Gods name, or his ſons name, as that it is an hindrance thereto; and therefore that we may be wiſe, it is needfull that we become fools, and lay aſide, and ceaſe from our Wiſdome and underſtanding. But the *Wiſdome* and *underſtanding* here commended to us, and that which will render us happy in the injoyment of it, is, the *Wiſdome* that is from a bove, which is firſt pure then peace able, &c. *Jam.* 3. 17. even the Wiſdome of God, and not that of our owne: according to that, my ſon, attend unto my *Wiſdome*; and bow thine eare unto my *underſtanding*, *Prov.* 5. 1. and ſo hereby is meant and ſignified to us.

1. Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, *in whom dwelleth all the fullneſs of the Godhead bodily* in whom dwelleth the father, and on whom reſts the holy Spirit. And he is ſo called.

1. As he is the Son of God by divine and eternall generation: ſo where as in one place it is ſaid; the Lord by *Wiſdome* founded the earth; by *underſtanding* hath he eſtablisht the heavens; in another it is ſaid, he created all things by Jeſus Chriſt. Compare *Prov.* 3. 19. with *Epheſ.* 3. 11. *Hebr.* 1. 2. and of this Wiſdome, even of Chriſt in this conſideration of him, it is ſaid by himſelfe, the Lord poſſeſſed me in the beginning of his way, before his workes of old. *I was ſet up from everlaſting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was: when there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fontaines abounding with water*, &c. *Prov.* 8. 23, 32.

2. And he is ſo called, and may be comfortably viewed by us as *Wiſdome*, as he was abaſed for us, and tooke our nature upon him when we had ſinned, and departed from God, and as he was crucified for us,

and

and by the grace of God taſted death for every man, and is raiſed againe, according to the ſcriptures: ſo Chriſt is the Wiſdome of God, and power of God 1 *Corinth.* 1. 22, 24. ſo when the Apoſtle ſaith, that he came not with excellency of ſpeech, or of Wiſdome declaring the teſtimony of God, that the beleivers faith might not ſtand in the Wiſdome of men, but in the power of God: He addeth; howbeit we ſpeak Wiſdome among them that are perfect; yet not the Wiſdome of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to nought: But we ſpeak the Wiſdome of God in a myſtery, even the hidden Wiſdome, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they knowne, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Where it appeareth, that Jeſus Chriſt the Lord of glory, is the Wiſdome which they preached, 1 *Corinth.* 2. 1, 8. with 2 *Corinth.* 4. 5. and ſo this excellent one calls himſelfe Wiſdome and underſtanding, *Prov.* 8. 12, 14. compare *Matth.* 23. 34. with *Luc.* 11. 49. and he is called Wiſdome and underſtanding.

1. Becauſe he is the great cleare, and comfortable evidence, and manifeſtation of the Wiſdome of God: here it is brightly diſcovered, and may chearfully be viewed in the croſs of Chriſt Jeſus. He did by Wiſdome make the heavens, and give a being to all things; and in his workes of creation it may be ſeen by us: but this invention of his is a greater and clearer diſcovery of his infinite Wiſdome, and unſearchable underſtanding: For in his firſt creating us there was nothing contrary to his worke: But unto his ſhewing mercy to us where we were fallen, there was ſomwhat in the way ſtood croſs, and contrary; his juſtice which was provoked by us muſt be ſatisfied, his truth fulfilled; his law which we had tranſgreſſed, muſt be anſwered;

and

and his wrath appeaſed: our ſin muſt be purged away our death died, overcome, and abolished; and all creatures were inſufficient for theſe things; no man could redeeme his brother by any meanes, nor give to God a ranſome for his owne ſoule, *Pſal.* 49. 6, 7. righteouſneſs could not come by the law, *Galat.* 2. 21. nor could any creature in heaven or earth diviſe a meanes for the helpfullneſs of us: this Wiſdome was hid from the eyes of all living, *Job* 28. 12, 22. this paſſed the underſtanding of men and Angells, *Philip.* 4. 7. but herein appeared the manifold and unſearchable Wiſdome of God, who in the exerciſe thereof hath deviſed a meanes that his banished should not be utterly expelled from him, 2 *Sam.* 14. 14. *Without controverſy great is the myſtery of godlineſs God was manifeſt in the flesh, juſtified in the ſpirit,* 1 *Timot.* 3. 16. there is hidden and wonderfull Wiſdome contained therein; that the creatour should become a creature; that the word that was God should be made flesh; that the everlaſting father should thus become a ſon, and the mighty God a child, yea that he who was the holy one of God yea holineſs it ſelfe, should be made ſin for us; that God should lay downe his life for us; and all this to ſo gracions an end, not to condemne the world, but that thorow him the world might beſaved here in was admirable, and unſearchable Wiſdome; and here in we may clearely, and comfortably ſee, that the creatour of the ends of the earth fainteth not, nor is weary, there is no ſearching of his underſtanding, that ſo when we walk in darkneſs and ſee no light, we might truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon our God, *Iſay.* 40. 27, 29. hence he as our ſaviour is ſaid to be the onely wiſe God, *Jude* 25. hence alſo the Apoſtle, when he had ſaid, *this is a faithfull ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners*, preſently addes;

Now

Now unto the king eternall, immortall, invisible, the onely wise God be honour, &c. 1 *Tim.* 1. 15, 17. Hee hath herein evidenced himselfe to be the alone, and onely wise God, in finding out such a way for the delivering us from so great a death, and curse, and from the hand of all our enemies; and for the treasuring up all the fullnes of forgivenes, grace, and spirit in Christ, that we sinfull creatures of mankind, might be brought back to God.

2. Christ Jesus is also said to be Wisdome and understanding, because he is become the treasury, fountaine, and store-house of it; he is the beginning, the first borne from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence: *for it hath pleased the father that in him should all fullnes dwell, in him dwelleth all the fullnes of the Godhead bodily*, *Colos.* 1. 18, 19. and 2. 9. *In him are hid all the treasures of Wisdome and knowledge*, *Colos.* 2. 3. so he who calleth himselfe Wisdome saith, counsell is mine, and sound Wisdome; I am (or have) understanding, &c. *Prov.* 8. 12, 14. Salomon, who set in order these Proverbs, was a wise man, yea, in his time, wiser then all men: God gave him wisdome and understanding exceeding much, and largenes, or wideness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore, 1 *King.* 4. 29, 31. *but behold a greater then Salomon is here*, *Matth.* 12. 42. for he was taught, and directed to seek out, and set in order these Proverbs by Christ Jesus that one shepherd, *Eccles.* 12. 9, 11. God hath not given unto him the spirit by measure, but hath given all things, and so all Wisdome into his hand, *Joh.* 3. 34, 35. On him resteth the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of Wisdome and understanding, the spirit of counsell and might; the spirit of knowledge, and of the feare of the Lord; and he is quicke of understanding, *Isay.* 11. 1, 2, 3. and 42. 1. and 61. 1. He knoweth the father,

and

and the mind, and counſells of the father, as is ſignified, in that when John wept much becauſe no man was found worthy to open, and to read the booke of Gods counſells, and purpoſes; one of the elders ſaid unto him, weep not, behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David (even the lamb who was ſlaine, and who hath ſeven eyes, which are the ſeven ſpirits of God) hath prevailed to open the booke, and to looſe the ſeven ſeales thereof; and the foure beaſts, and twenty and foure elders in the new ſong they ſang, confeſs, that the lamb which was ſlaine was worthy to take the book, and to open the ſeales thereof, jea and an innumerable company of Angells confirme it, and ſay, worthy is the lamb that was ſlaine to receive Wiſdome, *Revel.* 5. 1. 5. 9, 12, and he is quick of underſtanding, and knowes us, and what our needs and wants are, and how to ſupply them; he knowes how to teach us ſinners; to make wiſe us ſimple ones, to ſpeake a word in due ſeaſon to the weary, to open the eyes of the blind; to bring forth the priſoners out of the pit; to heale the broken hearted; to forgive the guilty, wash the polluted, and perfect what ſoever concerneth us. And he knowes the plots and deſignes of our enemies, and adverſaries, and how to diſappoint, and defeat them, that their hands may, not performe their enterprizes: yea he knowes all things, *all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to doe*, *Joh.* 21. 17. *Hebr.* 4. 13, 14. and this unſearchable Wiſdome and underſtandidg he hath to improve for our good as the ſaviour of all men, eſpecially of them that beleive; and to diſpenſe to us according to our needs and capacities: and his willingneſs to improve it for us, and communicate it to us is abundantly evidenced in the great abaſement where to he ſo willingly humbled himſelfe for mankind that he might obtaine all things pertaining to life and godlineſs

into

into himſelfe for us. Oh! let us rejoice in him, and not glory in our owne Wiſdome: for he is made of God for us Wiſdome; that, according as it is written, *he that glorieth may glory in the Lord*, 1 *Corinth.* 1.29,31.

3. He alſo in the Object of Wiſdome and underſtanding, in knowing whom we may be made truly wiſe, and furnished with ſound Wiſdome, and ſee and know things for our good; ſo [Wiſdome] many times ſignifieth, the Object of *Wiſdome*; or that which is to be knowne, and in the underſtanding where of we shall be rendred wiſe indeed, *Prov.* 1. 2. and 5. 1. In coming unto, and knowing Jeſus Chriſt, we may know the father, ſo as to beleive, and hope in, and love him; no man knoweth the father but the ſon, and he to whomſoever the ſon will reveale him: come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy loden (ye that run to the wiſe and prudent, and read many bookes, and tire your ſelves herewith, and yet meet not with what you ſeeke for) I will give you reſt, ſaith our ſaviour, *Matth.* 11. 25,28. He is the image of the inviſible God, in ſeing whom we may ſee the father alſo; and whoſoever cometh unto and followeth him shall not abide in darkneſs, but shall have the light of life; he will shew them the father, and give them the knowledge of him; *and this is life eternall, that they know him the onely true God*, *Joh.* 8. 12. and 12. 44, 46. and 14. 6, 10. and 17. 3. *Coloſ.* 1. 15. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkneſs, hath shined the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jeſus Chriſt; even the glory of his Wiſdome, power, truth, holineſs, and juſtice, 2 *Corinth.* 4. 4, 6. yea and he gives ſuch a gracious and amiable diſcovery of the father to us, that there thorow we might be incouraged to come unto, and beleive in him, and put our truſt under the shadow of his Wings. For here in we may ſee that he is the God of love, the

God of all grace: we may in the croſs of Chriſt ſee Gods ſecret will, even what his will towards man was, when ſecret; this Chriſt hath revealed: God is love, charity it ſelfe, he is ſo eſſentially, and was ſo towards mankind when they had ſinned againſt, and departed from him: And in this he hath manifeſted himſelfe to be love, and manifeſted his love to us, which was hid in himſelfe, becauſe he ſent his onely begotten ſon into the World, to be the ſaviour of it: 1 *Joh.* 4. 8, 9, 10, 14, 16. *Joh.* 3. 16. in Chriſt our ſaviour appeareth, that his will, which was ſecret, was good will, and not evill will toward mankind, *Luc.* 2. 10, 14. Chriſt hath revealed the father who was hidden from us, and reavealed his thoughts and heart; and in him we may ſee, that God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all; that God will have all men to be ſaved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, 1 *Tim.* 2. 4, 6. And in him we may know our ſelves ſo as to be humbled and abaſed in ſight of our owne vileneſs and wretchedneſs, and to loath our ſelves, and have pride hidden from us: for ſaith the Apoſtle, we thus judge, *that if one died for all, then* were all dead; and he died for all, 2 *Corint.* 5. 14, 15. In that Chriſt died for all by the grace of God, herein it appeareth that we were all dead, condemned to die, and deſerved to have died that death which he taſted for every man, and to have Perished in it for ever: We were accurſed creatures, and helpleſs in our miſery, as is evident, in that he hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us, *Pſal.* 49. 6, 7. *Galat.* 3. 13. yea in that he died for our ſake that he might obtaine eternall redemption; and in him dwelleth all fullneſs; He is made of God Wiſdome and righteouſneſs, herein appeareth that we were deſtitute of all good, empty creatures, *Job* 11. 12. that we have no Wiſdome in us naturally; no light in our underſtandings, no freedome

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of will to any thing that is ſpiritually good, no affection, deſire, or inclination to the things that belong to our peace; no ſpark of Gods image left in us, but we are deſtitute thereof, and inclined to all that is evill; all have ſinned, and come short of the glory of God. *While we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly:* While we were yet ſinners (neither righteous, nor good) Chriſt died for us, *Rom.* 5. 6, 8. In him we may behold the vileneſs of ſin ſo as to abhorre it, and that it may be an abomination to our ſoules; in that God hath ſo punished and condemned it in the perſon of Chriſt Jeſus, who knew no ſin, *Rom.* 8. 3. He was wounded, or tormented for our tranſgreſſions, bruiſed for our iniquities: ſuch was the odiouſneſs of ſin to God, as that when it was but imputed to his ſon, he ſpared him not: but it pleaſed the lord to bruiſe him, he hath put him to griefe. Were this conſidered by us, it would be powerfull to cauſe us to ſay, how ſhall we live any longer in ſin for which our ſaviour ſuffered ſo great and in expreſſible ſorrowes? *Eſa.* 53. 4, 10. *Rom.* 8. 32. and 6. 1, 2, 3. and 4. 25. 1 *Petr.* 3. 18. Aſwell as alſo in Chriſt we may perceive the greatneſs of the ſin of not beleiving on Chriſt, who, by the grace of God taſted death for every man; and is raiſed againe, and is become ſuch a good foundation and object of faith, that mens faith and hope might be in God, *Joh.* 16. 8, 9. 1 *Petr.* 2. 6, 7, 8. he that beleiveth not God hath made him a liar, becauſe he beleiveth not the record that God gave of his ſon: and this is the record, that God hath given to us eternall life: he that beleiveth not that God hath given to him eternall life in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made God a liar, and is therefore condemned, and the wrath of God abideth on him while he abideth in un beleife, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10, 11. *Joh.* 3. 16, 18, 36. if Chriſt died for the feweſt of mankind onely, it would be no

ſin in the greateſt part for whom he died not, not to beleive on Chriſt: Yea they would beleive a lye in ſo doing: but this is an ungodly conception, for Chriſt died for all, and roſe againe, that all men thorow him might beleive, *Joh.* 1.7. and 17.21, 23.

In Chriſt alſo we may ſee the unprofitableneſs of our workes of righteouſneſs, that we might not have Confidence therein, *Joh.* 16. 10. 1 *Corint.* 1.29, 30. if righteouſneſs could have come by the law, by the Workes or ſacrifices there of, then Chriſt died in vaine *Galat.* 2. 21. hence the Apoſtle, though he was Concerning the righteouſneſs of the law blameleſs, yet, what things were gaine to him, the Priviledges, and workes of the flesh, thoſe he counted loſs for Chriſt. Yea doubt leſs, ſaith he, and I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord, for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and doe count them but dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having mine owne righteouſneſs which is of the law, but that which is thorow the faith of Chriſt, &c. *Philip.* 3.4.9. 't Is he, and he onely, that hath brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs thorow his perſonall abaſement and ſufferings: even the righteouſneſs of God without the law, which was witneſſed by the law and the Prophets; but is now manifeſted by the faith of Chriſt to be unto all; and upon all them that beleive, for there is no difference. *Dan.* 9. 26. *Rom.* 3.21.22.

In Chriſt we may ſee death, even the firſt death, which was the wages of our firſt departure from God, ſo as not to feare it, nor any afflictions, weaknoſſes, ſickneſſes, which are fore runners, and branches of it; and which God is now ordering to us while it is called to day: For Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour hath by the grace of God taſted this death for every man, and hath overcome and abolished it, taken out the ſting, and deſtructive

ſtructive nature out of it, ſo as that now there is no hurt in it, nothing in it to ſeparate us from te love of God, or keep us out of heaven; nor ſhall any man perish therein for ever, but all ſhall in due time be raiſed out of it, by him who died for all, and roſe againe: Chriſt hath in overcoming this death made it a ſhadow, it is not the lively image of what ſometimes it was. 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. *Gal.* 3. 13. *Pſal.* 23. 4. Yea not onely ſo, but he the great God and our Saviour hath turned our curſes into bleſſings; and the afflictions, and corrections he is ordering are ordered to a gracious end, as is before shewne.

In Chriſt alſo, this havenly Wiſdome, we may ſee life, even our naturall life, how it is procured for us, and by what meanes we have a comfortable injoyment of it and of Gods mercies, even by Chriſt, who gave his flesh for the life of the World. *Joh.* 6. 51. in him is life, and the life is the light of men. *Joh.* 1. 4. Had he not laid downe his life for us, we could have had no comfortable injoyment of our lives, or of Gods creatures, but had been alwayes, and altogither accurſed and miſerable, and all our life time thorow feare of death ſubject to the bondage of Satan. Hebr. 2. 14. 15. But *he hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us, for it is written, curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree.* *Gal.* 3. 13. and 4. 4 with *Rom.* 3. 19. And here we may alſo ſee to what end our lives are preſerved, and continued; that to us to live might be Chriſt: He died for all that they which live might not hence forth live to themſelves, but to him that died for them, and roſe againe, this was the very end of Chriſts ſuffering for us in the flesh, that we might thereby ceaſe from ſin; and thorow his grace that bringeth ſalvation to all men might live, not to the luſts of men, but to the will of God, 2 *Corinth* 5. 15. 1 *Petr.* 4. 1, 3. 1 *Joh.* 4. 9.

In this Wiſdome we may know who are borne of God, and ſo made of the elect and choſen generation; even all ſuch, and onely ſuch (who are of yeares of capacity, and where the goſpell is plainely declared) as come unto, and beleive on him. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know (as included in the knowledge of him) *that every one that doth righteouſneſs is borne of him*, 1 *Joh.* 2.29. To Chriſt coming, the living ſtone, diſallowed indeed of men (yea of the builders, and leaders of the people) but choſen of God and precious; ye alſo as lively ſtones are built up a ſpirituall houſe. Ye are an elect, and choſen generation, a royall prieſthood (though not owned by men as Gods clergy) aen holy nation a peculiar people, &c. Which in tim paſt were not a people, but now are the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy, 1 *Petr.* 2.4, 5, 9, 10. And here we may alſo ſee who are rejected, and reprobated of God: not any man in a perſonall conſideration, or before he was borne; but thoſe that diſallow, and reject Chriſt Jeſus, and perſiſt in refuſing, and rejecting him till the day of grace and patience be ended, 1 *Petr.* 2.6, 7, 8. Whoſoever ſhall fall on this ſtone (though they be builders) ſhall be broken; *but on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grinde him to powder*, *Matth.* 21.42-44. God ſo infinitely loveth his ſon, the ſon of his love, that whoſoever kiſſeth him not, but refuſeth him, and will not have him to reigne over them, his wrath will be kindled againſt them, and they ſhall be deſtroyed with an everlaſting deſtruction, *Pſal.* 2.10-12. *Joh.* 3.36.

In knowing Chriſt, the Wiſdome of God, we may come to have an uſefull underſtanding and knowledge of all the ſcriptures of truth, otherwiſe not; he is the interpreter, and opener of them to us in his croſs and teſtimony hence our ſaviour intimately inſtructs

ſtructs the Jewes, in ſearching the ſcriptures, to come unto him; and faults, and reproves them for not coming unto him in them, that they might have life, even the light of live, *Joh.* 5. 39, 40. our ſaviour, in shewing unto his diſciples in the ſcriptures the things Concerning himſelfe, thereby opened the ſcriptures to their underſtandings; and their underſtandings into the ſchriptures: and unleſs we come unto, and know Chriſt Jeſus, we shall remaine ignorant of the ſcriptures though we read them, and heare the voices of the Prophets and Apoſtles read to us: if we come not to Chriſt as the reſt, we shall have the word of the Lord to our ſelves precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, and there a little: and not ſee the harmony, and agreement of the ſcriptures, nor receive the uſe fullneſs of them, *Luk.* 24. 25, 27, 32, 44, 46. *Iſay.* 28. 12, 13.

Yea in a word, they that ſeeke the Lord to know him, win him, and be found in him, underſtand all things, *Prov.* 28. 5. the knowledge of this one, this excellent object of Wiſdome, is that which will make us wiſe to ſalvation: hence the Apoſtle determined *to know nothing elſe ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified*, 1 *Corint.* 2. 2. and to the end Timothy might have an underſtanding in all things, he exhorts him to remember, *that Jeſus Chriſt of the ſeed of David was raiſed from the dead according to his goſpell*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 7, 8. and the way whereby the Ho: Ghoſt teacheth all things, and leadeth into all truth, is to glorify Chriſt, and take of his things and shew unto us, *Joh.* 14. 26 and 16. 13, 14. oh that this were ſeriously, and heartily conſidered by us; that our hearts may be fixedly ſet to know Chriſt in and unto all things! *Philip.* 3. 8-10.

4. And he is called Wiſdome, becauſe he is the giver and diſpenſer of it: *the Lord giveth Wiſdome*,

Prov. 2. 6. hence the Apoſtle prayeth for Timothy, that the Lord would give him an underſtanding in all things: even the Lord Jeſus, 2 *Tim.* 2. 7. this is his gift; God hath given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternall life to as many as the father hath given him: *and this is life eternall, that they know thee the onely true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent*, *Joh.* 17. 2, 3. And himſelfe ſaith to his diſciples, I will give you a mouth and wiſdome, which all your adverſaries shall not be abele to gainſay, nor reſiſt, *Luk.* 21. 15. *Epheſ.* 4. 7.

2. By *Wiſdome* and *underſtanding* is meant alſo, the goſpel of Chriſt, which holy men of God have declared, as they were moved by the Ho: Ghoſt; even the goſpell as teſtified by the Prophets, in whom the ſpirit of Chriſt did ſignify before hand the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that should follow, 1 *Petr.* 1. 11. and as the ſame goſpell is now reported to us by the Apoſtles, with the Ho: Ghoſt ſent downe from heaven, ẏ. 12. Which is recorded, and preſerved to us in the records of it, in the ſcriptures of truth, thorow the greatneſs of God? goodneſs, and wonderfulneſs of his working; the ſumme and firſt things whereof, are, that Chriſt died for our ſins, even for the ſins of Jews and Gentiles according to the ſcriptures; and was buried; and roſe againe the third day, according to the ſcriptures, 1 *Corint.* 15. 1-4. *Rom.* 1. 1-4. this is called the word of Wiſdome, 1 *Corint.* 12. 8. and the goſpell, or preaching of the croſs, is ſaid to be the Wiſdome of God, 1 *Corint.* 1. 17, 18-23, 24. *Prov.* 5. 1. and 7. 1-4, 5. and this is called *Wiſdome* and *underſtanding*.

1. Becauſe Chriſt, who is Wiſdome, and underſtanding, is herein evidently ſet forth unto us before our eyes, even the eyes of our underſtanding *Galat.* 3. 1. here, though now we ſee him not as the firſt truſters

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in Chriſt did yet, we may ſee him in the evidence, and demonſtration of the ſpirit, and ſo in this word of faith, which is the evidence of things not ſeen; As Moſes, by faith, ſaw him that was invſible, *Hebr.* 11. 1, 13, 27. in which goſpell we may looke upon things that are not ſeen, 2 *Corint.* 4. 18. So here we may ſee the great ſufferings, and Wonderfull a baſement of Chriſt; and for whom he taſted death, and was raiſed againe, even for all mankind; *Hebr.* 2. 9. and here in this glaſs, we may with open face behold the glory of the Lord, 2 *Corint.* 3. 18. and therefore becauſe this goſpell teſtifieth of Chriſt, and diſcovers him to us who is Wiſdome, and underſtanding, therefore his name is named upon it.

2. Becauſe here in, eſpecially as now preached according to the revelation of the myſtery, God hath abounded in all wiſdome, and prudence unto the firſt truſters in Chriſt, and by them to us, having made knowne to us the myſtery of his will, &c. *Epheſ.* 1.8.9. herein the manifold Wiſdome of God is made knowne, that all men may ſee it in this gracious and bleſſed meanes which he hath deviſed, that his banished be not utterly expelled from him: Which is diſcovered to us in this Wiſdome, *Epheſ.* 3. 9. 10. here in God hath wrltten to us excellent things in counſells and knowledge; and in this goſpell are hid all the treaſures of Wiſdome, and knowledge, *Prov.* 22. 17-20. *Coloſ.* 2. 3.

3. And this may be called Wiſdome, and underſtanding, becauſe here by God makes wiſe the ſimple: and ſtill and further giveth Wiſdome to the Wiſe, and knowledge to them that know underſtanding, *Pſal.* 19. 7. and 119. 129, 130. and verſes 98, 99, 100. the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt doth give the ſpirit of Wiſdome and revelation in the knowledge, or goſpell, of Chriſt, and hereby openeth the eyes of the under-

ſtanding, *Epheſ.* 1. 17, 18. with this goſpell Paul was ſent to open the eyes of Jewes and Gentiles; and to turne them from darkneſs to light, *Act.* 26. 18. And in preaching this goſpell Chriſt, preacheth recovery of ſight to the blind, and opens their eyes, *Iſay.* 42. 1, 6, 7. and 61. 1. *Luk.* 4. 18. Oh that therefore we may bowe downe our eares, and heare theſe words of the wiſe (in which Chriſt is diſcovered to us and the manifold Wiſdome of God made knowne; and by which he giveth Wiſdome) and may apply our hearts unto his knowledge, for it is a pleaſant thing, if we keep them with in us, *Prov.* 22. 17, 18. In receiving theſe words, and hiding theſe commandements, the old and new commandment, with us; we shall be helped ſo to behold the excellency, and comelineſs of Chriſt, the Wiſdome of God, as to incline our eares unto Wiſdome, and apply our heart unto underſtanding; and to cry after knowledge, and lift up our voice for underſtanding, &c. *Prov.* 2. 1, 2, 3, 4.

3. By *Wiſdome* and *underſtanding* may be alſo meant, that gracious gift of Chriſt and God in him, which he giveth to men preventingly; and gives, and makes them partakers of who turne at his reproofes, in the light and ſtrength of his grace; even the opening of the mind, or eye of the ſoule, to know Jeſus Chriſt, and God in him, and all things in ſuch manner, and to ſuch end as the ſpirit maketh diſcovery of them, in the words, not of mans Wiſdome, but which the Holy Ghoſt hath taught, and teacheth; Comparing ſpirituall things with ſpirituall, *Epheſ.* 1. 17, 18. 1 *Joh.* 5. 20. even Wiſdome in the knowledge of Chriſt; and ſuch knowledge and underſtanding, as that there by we are led to feare God, and depart from evill: unto man he ſaid, the feare of the Lord that is Wiſdome, and to depart from evill is underſtanding, *Job* 28. 28. the feare of the Lord is the beginning, or, prin-

principall part of Wiſdome: A good underſtanding have all they that doe, *Pſal.* 111.10. *Prov.* 1.7. and 9,10. the feare of the Lord is the inſtruction of Wiſdome, that which wiſdome inſtructs us unto, even to worship God in the ſpirit, and rejoyce in Chriſt Jeſus; to ſerve God with reverence and godly feare; and to depart from iniquity, *Prov.* 15.33. and the feare of the Lord is to hate evill, even pride, and arrogancy, and the evill way, and the froward mouth; Which things Wiſdome hateth, *Prov.* 8. 12, 13. and therefore where as in the text, it is ſaid, *happy is the man that findeth Wiſdome:* the ſame happineſs is aſſured unto, and affirmed of him that confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſins, *Prov.* 28. 13, 14. He is a foole that ſporteth with, and makes a mock at ſin; Whatever Notionall underſtanding he may have, he is deſtitute of bleſſed Wiſdome: but a man of underſtanding hath wiſdome; he feareth, and departeth from evill, *Prov.* 10. 23. and 14. 9, 15, 16.

This then is the *Wiſdome* and *underſtanding* commended to us; Jeſus Chriſt, and the word of his grace; and that Wiſdome which he giveth, and knowledge, and underſtanding which cometh out of his mouth; even ſuch Wiſdome, and underſtanding of him as thereby we are led highly to prize, come unto, beleive in, and love him, and the father in him: and to hate, diſreſpect, and reject, whatſoever is hated, rejected, and diſeſteemed by him.

2. We have in the next place to conſider what is, this [*finding*, and *getting*, or *drawing* out] here ſpoken of, and what ſuppoſed herein, and needfull hereto. In Generall, by *finding* Wiſdome may be meant, a knowing, and underſtanding what this ſound wiſdome is; and where it is, and is to be had by us, as it is here diſtinguiſhed from *getting*: indeed where either of the expreſſions are mentioned alone, there it may meane what is here con-

contained in both; but here, they being both uſed diſtinctly, there maybe, and is to be a diſtinct conſideration of them: and ſo by *finding* is ſignified, as is ſaid, a knowing it, and knowing the place of it, where it is to be had by us: and then by *getting*, or *drawing out*, may be meant a futher buſineſs, to wit, a being made partaker of this excellent commodity, an obtaining it, or getting it into our poſſeſſion and hearts; an imbracement, retaining, keeping, and holding it faſt, as preſently afterwards is ſaid; happy is every one that retaineth her, even this Wiſdome and underſtanding. It is a laying hold of it, taking faſt hold of it, and not letting it goe, a keeping it as our life, *Prov.* 3. 18. and 4. 13. there may be a price in the hand of a foole to get wiſdome and he have no heart to it, no love or affection to, or courage for it; and thereby he deprives himſelfe of the happineſs here aſſured, *Prov.* 17. 16. but this exerciſe of finding and gettig is the ſame with that commended in the Wiſe merchant by our ſaviour, in his parable, *Matth.* 13. 45, 46. *The kingdome of heaven is like unto a merchant man ſeeking goodly pearles; who when he had found one pearle of great price, he went, and ſold all that he had, and bought it:* he firſt found it, and ſaw, and knew where it was, and was to be had; and then he did not content himſelfe that he had found Wiſdome ſimply, but he got it, and parted with all for it. Now then more particularly here may be ſuppoſed in the exerciſe here commended to us.

1. That this Wiſdome and underſtanding is not ours, or in us naturally, it is to be found and gotten; to which afterwards.

2. And that this excellent pearle is hid: in him are hid all the treaſures of Wiſdome and knowledge, *Coloſ.* 2. 3. it is a treaſure hid in a field, *Malach.* 13. 44. and to be ſearched for as hid treaſure, *Prov.* 2. 4. And to our finding of it is requiſite.

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1. An hearing where it is, an hearing the words of wiſdome, a diligent hearing, or hearing in hearing, as Wiſdome is lifting up her voice, and preventing us with an hearing capacity, which she is doing in due time: for naturally we are deafe, and untill prevented by Chriſt we cannot heare: but the ſon of God in due time is cauſing us when dead, to heare his voice, that we might heare in hearing and live, *Joh.* 5. 25. and when he is thus ſpeaking to us, and opening our eares then he requires us in the capacity afforded from him to heare, *Prov.* 20. 12. So Wiſdome and underſtanding ſaith; *heare, for I will ſpeake of excellent things*; and hearken unto me ô ye children; heare inſtruction and be wiſe, *Prov.* 8. 6, 32, 34. this is the one and firſt thing needfull unto our finding, and getting wiſdome, to heare the word of Chriſt, *Luc.* 10. 39, 42. Not to heare any thing, or any word; we are exhorted to ceaſe to here the inſtructions that cauſe to erre from the words of knowledge, *Prov.* 19. 27. and to take heed what we heare, *Mark.* 4. 24. but we are to heare Jeſus, and God in him, as ſpeaking to us by the holy Prophets and Apoſtles, in the ſcriptures of truth; and to this oftentimes are we called upon, even to heare the words of the wiſe faſtened by the maſters of aſſemblies, which are given from one shepherd, *Eccleſ.* 12. 10, 11. *Prov.* 19. 20. and 22 17. *Iſay.* 55. 1, 3. *Act.* 3. 22, 23. Aſwell as alſo.

2. It is requiſite as we heare, to ſeek for this excellent commodity, and ſearch after it with our hearts, yea with our whole hearts, as we have the excellency, and amiableneſs of it diſcovered to us: ſuch an applying, or cauſing our heart to come unto this Wiſdome as commended, and the commendation heard, is requiſite, as, that we cry after Wiſdome, and lift up our voice for underſtanding; that we ſeek her as ſilver, and ſearch for her as for hid treaſures, even

even with greateſt deſire, and diligence; and as thoſe that judge happineſs doth onely conſiſt in having this treaſure, and without which we are undone, and miſerable for ever, *Prov.* 2. 1, 4. and ſo ſearching for it, in all the ſcriptures of truth, which are the veines, as it were, where this inriching, and happy treaſure may be had, *Joh.* 5.39. and in all ordinances; and in the aſſemblies of Gods people; *Prov.* 8. 34. and in ſo doing we ſhall finde it.

3. And to our *getting* is requiſite, a ſelling all that we have when we have found it; and buying, or getting it into our hearts, and poſſeſſion: according to that; *buy the truth, and ſell it not: Wiſdome, inſtruction and underſtanding*, *Prov.* 23. 23. *Matth.* 13. 44, 46. here lieth the ſtick with many perſons, and too much with us all; we would have wiſdome if we might part with nothing for it, but keep our owne things ſtill; but this connot be: *if any man come unto me ſaith* our ſaviour, *and hate not father, and mother, wife, and children; brethren, and ſiſters: yea and his owne life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple and whoſoever he be of you* (ſpeaking to his diſciples, and the multitudes) *that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple*, *Luk.* 14. 26, 27, 33. We are all too much like the young man who would faine have in herited eternall life; when our ſaviour told him, and ſaid unto him, *One thing thou lackeſt; goe thy way, ſell whatſoever thou haſt, and give to the poore and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven, and come, and take up thy croſs, and follow me: he was ſad at that ſaing, and went away grieved, for he had great poſſeſſions*, *Mark.* 10. 17, 22. So it is too much with us, if we might keep our owne things and have wiſdome too; if we could carry on theſe two deſignes, to ſerve God and Mammon; and could have Chriſt, and love the world alſo, then we could be content; and this would pleaſe us; but this cannot

be

be we muſt deny our ſelves, our bruitish luſts and deſires; aſwell as alſo our wiſdome, righteouſneſs, love of the world, and the things thereof, the honour, praiſe eſteeme friendship, and fellowship thereof; and take up our croſs and follow him: *yea the that loveth father, or mother more then him, is not worthy of him; and he that loveth ſon or daughter more then him, is not worthy of him; and he that taketh not his croſs, and followeth after him, is not worthy of him, Matth.* 10. 37, 39. and 16. 24. we muſt ſell all that we have, all muſt be parted with, that we may win Chriſt, and be found in him: not as if our things were ſo worthy, as that we might deſerve there by this heavenly wiſdome; nor are we to part with them as a valuable conſideration; for all the things we can deſire are not to be compared to this pearle: but our things will hinder us from having, and obtaining Wiſdome, if we let them not goe; therefore though we have no Worth, nor wortineſs, yet we muſt buy wiſdome, though without money and price; for no man can ſerve two maſters; we muſt part with our ſins and idolls, or otherwiſe we cannot get this Wiſdome, and underſtanding.

And if we take in the reading in the Margin; *happy is the man that draweth out underſtanding*, hereby may be meant.

1. A drawing it out for our owne uſe, and benefit; and ſo diligence, and labour of the inward man eſpecially, is to be uſed and exerciſed, and hereby the Ho: Ghoſt may have reference to the drawing out water out of a well, or deep place; and it is like that, *Iſay.* 12. 3. therefore with joy shall ye *draw* water *out* of the wells of ſalvation: namely, out of the doctrine of the Prophets, and Apoſtles falſe teachers are ſaid to be wells without water, there is nothing in them, or in their doctrine to refresh, and ſatisfy, 2 *Petr.* 2. 17.

but

but theſe teachers ſent of God, and who are even Gods mouth to us, have water in their word & doctrine; and we are therefore to ſearch thereinto for *Wiſdome* and *underſtanding*, and draw it out, when we finde it, *Act.* 17. 11. Or to draw it out as out of a veſſell, *Joh.* 2, 8. 2 *Corinth.* 4. 7. and ſo ſecondarily out of their words wo have beleived on Chriſt thorow the Prophets, and Apoſtles words, and have the word of reconciliation put into their hearts and mouthes, *Prov.* 20. 5. And.

2. We are to *draw out underſtanding* for the good of others alſo, and to the end we may be inſtruments for communicating it to others, as the like Phraſe is uſed, *Iſay.* 58. 10. *John.* 2. 8. Thus have we ſpoken to the *finding*, and *getting* Wiſdome and underſtanding; what it is, what ſuppoſed herein, and needfull hereto, according to my weakneſs.

2. We come in the next place to note ſome inſtructions contained in this affirmation of the happineſs of the man that findeth Wiſdome, and getteth, or draweth out underſtanding. As.

1. That men are naturally without this Wiſdome and underſtanding.

2. That yet men may finde this Wiſdome, and get, or draw out this underſtanding.

3. That the preſent time is the apportunity of finding and getting.

4. He is and ſhall be an happy man that findeth, and getting this Wiſdome and underſtanding.

1. That men are naturally without this Wiſdome and underſtanding; even deſtitute of Wiſdome in the knowledge of Chriſt; they are without Chriſt, and all ſpirituall underſtanding, *Epheſ.* 2. 12. A Wiſdome indeed they have, but ſuch as is foolishneſs with God; they are wiſe to doe evill, and to purſue their drunken, unclean, covetous, ambitious, re-

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vengefull luſts; but to doe good they have no underſtanding, *Jerem.* 4. 22. every man is bruitish by his knowledge, *Ierem* 10. 14. God did indeed make man righteous at firſt, in his owne image, after his likeneſs; and put Wiſdome into his inward parts; he was created in knowledge, as the Apoſtle ſignifieth, when he ſaith, ye have put on the new man, Which is *renewed* in knowledge after the image of him that created him: *renewing*, is a reſtoring a Perſon or thing that is deformed to its firſt, and primitive eſtate: there in then is intimated, that at firſt man was created in knowledge; Aſwell as alſo it ſo appeares in that it is ſaid, that the renewing in knowledge is after the image of him that created him; and ſo at firſt man being created in or after his image, he was created in knowledge, and underſtanding, *Coloſ.* 3. 10. But man not abiding in that honour in which he was made, but aſpiring to an equality with God, and deſiring ſome higher wiſdome, and knowledge thorow his liſtening to the Lye of the tempter; *Geneſ.* 3. 5, 6. Miſt what he aſpired unto, and loſt what he had; and ſo man in honour not abiding therein, underſtandeth not, but is like the beaſts that perish, *Pſal.* 49. 12. 20. they are deſtitute of all true and ſound Wiſdome: that which they have leades them to labour to be rich, *Prov.* 23. 4. *Ezek.* 28. 4, 5. and to truſt in their riches, and worship their gold and ſilver, *Hoſe.* 13. 2. and to ſeek after greatneſs, and glory in this world, *Iſay.* 10. 13, 14. and fills them with enoyings and ſtrifes againſt all that ſtands croſs to their deſigne, *Jam.* 3. 14, 16. but as with reſpect to his Wiſdome that is from above, they are like wilde aſſes colts, *Job* 11. 12. In this conſideration they are all (untill, and further then in lightned of God) ſimple and foolish ones. And this is true of them all, even of thoſe alſo that have the higheſt eſteeme of themſelves: As, young perſons, they are

uſually highly conceited of themſelves, but they are ſimple, as is ſignified, in that the end of the Proverbs in making knowne Wiſdome is ſaid to be, to give ſubtilly to the ſimple, to the young man (who is ſimple alſo) knowledge and diſcretion, *Prov.* 1. 4. and 7. 7, 8. and this is true alſo of thoſe that have much of the Wiſdome of this World, who are great ſcholars, and rich in that knowledge which is ſcience fals ly ſo called: their wiſdome is foolishneſs with God; and the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wiſe that they are vaine, 1 *Corinth.* 3. 18, 20. and it is alſo true of thoſe that are of the profeſſed church; they are ſimple, and without underſtanding naturally, *Prov.* 1. 21, 22. *Rom.* 3. 1, 2, 9, 10, 11. Yea of all men, *Job* 32. 7, 9. hence Wiſdome ſaith to men, and the ſons of Man, *o ye ſimple underſtand Wiſdome, and ye fooles be ye of an underſtanding heart*, *Prov.* 8. 4, 5. and 30. 2, 3, 4. The naturall man receveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishneſs to him; nor can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned. 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. Out of the heart of men proceed evill thoughts of God, as if he had a ſecret pleaſure in the deſtruction of the greateſt part of man kind. *Ezech.* 33. 10, 11. and though he ſpeaketh faire, and commands the goſpell to be preached to all, yet he hath a ſecret will contrary to his revealed: We need not be taught, and ſtrengthned in ſuch blaſphemous thoughts, for they naturally proceed out of our hearts. And thence alſo proceed evill, thoughts of our ſelves; high eſteemes, and conceits of our ſelves, from whence we are filled with pride. And evill thoughts of the world, as if the injoyment of that would render us truly happy; and hence proceedeth covetouſneſs: Yea and evill thoughts of all things, thinking evilly, and calling light darkneſs, and darkneſs light; *every imagination of mans heart is onely evill continually*, Geneſ. 6. 5.

6. 5. And hence we are chuſing, loving, and affecting vaine things that cannot profit, nor helpe us, becauſe they are vaine, even any thing beſides this excellent Wiſdome, to wit, Chriſt, and God in him. *Mark.* 7. 21, 22.

Uſe. 1. This conſideration might be of uſefullneſs to us, to hide pride from us, for we are all naturally fooles: And to cauſe us not to glory in Gods preſence, but be willing to become fooles that we may be wiſe, in receiving this heavenly Wiſdome here commended to us. 1 *Cor.* 1. 29-31. and 3. 18, 19.

2. To admoniſch us to ceaſe from man, for wherein is he to be accounted of. *Iſay.* 2. 22. and not to have our faith ſtanding in their Wiſdome, we are ſuch ſimple, and foolish ones as that if men uſe good words, and faire ſpeeches to us, and have much of the Wiſdome of this world, eſpecially if alſo therewith they have a forme of godlineſs upon them to depend upon, and admire them, and receive what they ſay, though they come in their owne name; and to imbrace their interpretations of the ſcripture, though therein they conſent not to wholeſome words, but cauſe diviſions, and offences contrary to the doctrine of the Apoſtles *Rom.* 16. 17, 18. and to glory in the Wiſdome of man, whereas their wiſdome is foolishneſs with God: And were this conſidered by us as diſcovered to us in the light and inſtructions of the goſpell, it would take us off from that idolatrous eſteeme we have of them, and their Wiſdome. *Matth.* 11. 25, 26. 1 *Corinth.* 2. 1-5. and 3. 18-21.

3. To ſhew unto us the great grace and love of God to us, in taking notice of ſuch ſimple foolish ones as we are with him, and in his account who judgeth righteouſly; and in making a way for us that we might become wiſe: He hath not deſpiſed us in this ſad condition into which we brought our ſelves, but hath of

his goodneſs prepared for us; and is giving good counſell to us, in hearing which we may be made wiſe: to ſuch he calls, be ye of an underſtanding heart, heare for I will ſpeak of excellent things, *Prov.* 8. 4, 6, 7. Behold God is mighty and deſpiſed not any, he is mighty in ſtrengh and Wiſdome; and yet deſpiſeth not us who are weak and ſimple, *Job* 36. 5. learn we of him.

4. To come to Chriſt in the teſtimony, that we may be made wiſe, *Matth.* 11. 27, 28. and to move here to, conſider the next inſtruction, viz.

2. That though men are naturally ſimple, and fooles, yet thorow the grace of our Lord Jeſus, they may finde this excellent Wiſdome, and get, or draw out, this underſtanding here commended to us, while it is called to day, and this is intimated to us, in that the holy Ghoſt here affirmeth, and preſently evidenceth the bleſſedneſs, and happineſs of the man that finds it; of the man indefinitely; he had ſpoken before to the ſons of Wiſdome more directly, *v.* 11, 12. but here, happy is the *Man*, &c. and that men, any man, that is come to yeares of capacity, may finde, and get it in Gods opportunity, appeareth.

1. Becauſe all the treaſures of Wiſdome, and knowledge are hid in Chriſt for men, *Coloſ.* 2. 3. all things are delivered to him of the father; and on this ground he inviteth, and calls all that labour, and are heavy laden, and are ſeeking Wiſdome were it is not to be found, to come unto him, *Matth.* 11. 27, 28. Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Wiſdome of God, as is declared to us in the words which the Holy Ghoſt hath thought; took upon him the nature of mankind; and therefore when he was borne, the Angell ſaith, *Behold I bring unto you good tidings of great joy which ſhall be unto all people*, *Luk.* 2. 10, 11. and he had the treſpaſſes of the world imputed to him, even the guilt of mankinds

firſt

firſt ſin and ſinfullneſs; and he bare the ſin of the world in his owne body, 2 *Corinth.* 5. 19, 21. *Joh.* 1. 29. And was delivered for their offences, he died for *all*, even for *all* that were dead; and by the grace of God taſted dead for every man; and is raiſed againe for their juſtification, *Rom.* 4. 25. 2 *Corinth.* 5. 14, 15. *Hebr.* 2. 9. and hath redeemed all mankind in himſelfe from the curſe of the law, and delivered them from the neceſſary ſlavery of ſatan, he is aſcended up on high, who deſcended firſt into the lower parts of the earth, and hath led captivity captive; and hath received gifts of forgiveneſs, Wiſdome, and underſtanding for men, yea for the rebellious alſo, that the Lord God might dwell among them, *Galat.* 3. 13. and 4. 4, 5. with, *Rom.* 3. 19. *Pſal.* 68. 18. God hath prepared Wiſdome for us, he hath prepared his dinner, even a feaſt of fat things for all people, his oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, and prepared for Jewes, and Gentiles, even for all men, *Matth.* 22. 2, 4, 8. *Iſay.* 25. 6. *Job* 28. 27. this is the record that God hath given of his ſon, that he hath given to us mankind eternall life; and this life is in his ſon, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10, 11. He is the ſecond man, the laſt Adam, of whom the firſt was a figure, *Rom.* 5. 14. and as God did in bleſſing the firſt man bleſs us all in him, and there create us in his owne image, after his owne likeneſs, even in knowledge and underſtanding; ſo now there is bleſſing in this ſeed of the woman, who hath broke the head of the ſerpent, for all the families of the earth; in him we are againe created after the image of God in a more glorious manner then ever we were in the firſt publick man; he hath by his blood obtained eternall redemption for us, even a recovery of what we loſt and forfeited by our ſinning againſt, and departure from God: in him there is perfection, and compleatneſs for every man; and he is

in our nature and for us become Wiſdome; and counſell is his, and ſound Wiſdome, he hath underſtanding and ſtrength, 1 *Corinth.* 15. 45. *Hebr.* 9. 12. *Jam.* 3. 9. *Coloſſ.* 1. 28. *Prov.* 8. 10, 14. *Wiſdome hath builded her houſe, she hath hewne out her ſeven pillars, she hath killed her killing, she hath mingled her wine, she hath alſo furnished her table*, she hath made a rich and large proviſion and prepared for all, even for all that are ſimple, and want underſtanding, before she ſends forth her maidens, and ſervants, and invites them to come into the houſe, *and to eat of her bread*, *Prov.* 9. 1, 2, 3, 5. there are waters, wine, and milke bread, good fatneſs, and whatſoever will give ſatisfaction, prepared for every thirſter; not onely for gracious thirſters, ſuch as thirſt out of a former taſte of the ſweetneſs and excellency of this proviſion, but alſo for ſuch as have no money; ſuch as have no worth, or worthineſs in them: ſuch as labour for that which is not bread; and ſpend their money for that which will not ſatiſfy: and this is certainly prepared for them before proclamation is made, and invitation given unto them; and he that is athirſt may come; and whoſoever will may take of the water of life freely; *Iſay.* 55. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7. *Revel.* 22. 17. this is a firſt and fundamentall Demonſtration that any man may find, and get Wiſdome and underſtanding, becauſe it is prepared in Chriſt Jeſus, who gave himſelfe a ranſome for all men, for every ſinfull ſoule of mankind; without which it were altogither impoſſible for them to have this rich, and inriching commodity. But.

2. Not onely hath he thus provided of his goodneſs for poore mankind; but alſo he giveth Wiſdome to men, and brings it nigh unto them in due time; eſpecially to us upon whom the name of Chriſt is called; and unto, and amongſt whom the ſcriptures in the plaine records of them are vouch ſafed, and preſerved tho-

thorow the wonderfullneſs of Gods goodneſs. God by his ſpirit calls, and cries to men, and tells them where Wiſdome is to be had; and gives unto them both ſome diſcovery of this excellent object of Wiſdome, in knowing when they might be made wiſe: and ſome opening of the eye of the underſtanding, that they might behold Chriſt Jeſus as diſcovered, and live: Chriſt Jeſus is found of them that ſought him not; and made manifeſt to them that asked not after him; and ſaith, *behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by his name, Iſay.* 65. 1. with *Rom.* 10. 20. and he who is a juſt God and a ſaviour, and there is none beſides him, ſaith, look unto me all the ends of the earth, and be ye ſaved; and he who thus ſpeaks and calls is mighty to ſave, for he is God, and there is none elſe, *Iſay.* 45. 21, 22. Now he calls not to men to look unto him, or heare what he ſaith, untill he firſt manifeſts himſelfe unto them, and ſpeakes of excellent things; according to that, all ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, ſe ye when (and not before) he lifts up an enſigne on the mountaines (even Chriſt Jeſus in the glorious goſpell, and teſtimonies of his goodneſs) and when he bloweth a trumpet (to proclaime and preach good newes to you) heare ye, *Iſay.* 18. 3. with, *Chap.* 11. 10. and 40. 9. He that hath ſearched Wiſdome out, and prepared it, doth alſo declare it to us; and shewes forth its excellency, that we might be allured there with to get and obtaine Wiſdome, *Job* 28. 27. God hath glorified, and doth in mens proper ages glorify Chriſt Jeſus by his ſpirit eſpecially in the goſpell as declared in the ſcriptures of truth; and in the plaine and faithfull declaration thereof; that men might run unto him from all other things, for all Wiſdome, underſtanding, righteouſneſs and ſtrength, *Iſay.* 55. 5, 6, 7. And alſo in due time Chriſt is opening the blind eyes

of men, thath they might look unto him, and be inlightned, and made wiſe by him; and that their faces may not be ashamed, *Iſay.* 42. 1, 6, 7. He is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; the light of the world, *Joh.* 1. 9. and 8. 12. and 12. 46. and God in and by him giveth to all men, liberally that whereby they may be made partakers of Wiſdome, *Jam.* 1. 5. And God in Chriſt by his ſpirit doth both diſcover unto men, and give unto them Wiſdome, even the object of Wiſdome; and gives unto them ſome ſight, and opening of the eye to behold it in and thorow his teſtimonies in the holy ſcriptures, the Teſtimony of the Lord is ſure, making wiſe the ſimple; namely, both rendring Chriſt precious unto them; and opening the eye of their ſoules that they might know Chriſt, and win him, *Pſal.* 19. 7, 8. the entrance of Gods words giveth light to diſcover *that*, in knowing whereof we may be wiſe indeed; and it giveth underſtanding unto the ſimple, *Pſal.* 119. 129, 130. My Father, ſaith our ſaviour, giveth you the true bread from heaven; in receiving and eating where of they should be made wiſe: but how should they receive this heavenly bread? they, as all men are, were dead, and without life in themſelves, and had no will to it, nor ſtrength to receive it: to remove this diſcouragement our ſaviour addes; the bread of God is he that cometh downe from heaven; and giveth life to he world, which hath none naturally: this bread of Wiſdome is the moſt excellent bread, it is the bread of God, living, quickening bread; it prevents them with life that have none, aſwell as preſerveth them in life, even unto eternall life that eat it: but how doth this bread of God give live? our ſaviour tells us, in the word in which it is declared and commended to us: *the words, ſaith he, that I ſpeak unto you they are ſpirit, and they are life*, *Joh* 6. 27, 32, 33.

33, 35, 51, 63. the ſpirit of Wiſdome and revelation is given in the knowledge, and goſpell of Chriſt, *Epheſ.* 1. 17. Chriſt was anointed with the holy ſpirit to preach the goſpell, or glad tidings of and concerning himſelfe; and therewith to preach recovery of ſight to the blind; to preach their eyes open; and to give light to them that ſit in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death, *Luk.* 4. 18. and as he thus prevents men with the diſcovery of the excellency of himſelfe, and inlighteneth their eyes, *Prov.* 29. 31. he then calls unto and upon them to looke unto and behold him; and to come unto him, to receive this inſtruction and Wiſdome which he is giving unto them (*for no man can receive any thing except it be given him from above*, *Joh.* 3. 27.) and not ſilver, and knowledge rather then choice gold, *Prov.* 8. 6, 10, 11. to get Wiſdome, get underſtanding, and not forget it, neither decline from the words of his mouth, in which Wiſdome is brought, and given to us, *Prov.* 4. 4, 8. and not onely doth Wiſdome call and cry unto us, but alſo she ſtretcheth fort her hand to help and ſtrengthen us to receive it: where the word of this king of kings is, there is power, *Eccleſ.* 8. 4. he is not onely opening mens eyes in and by his goſpell, but alſo turning them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of ſatan to God, that men might come unto him, *Prov.* 1. 20, 24. *Act.* 26. 18. 22, 23. he is in and by his law and doctrine converting the ſoule, wither men be converted or no; and yet to the end they might be converted; and therefore calls upon them, be ye converted, not convert your ſelves; be ye ſaved; be ye reconciled to God; be ye wiſe; be ye of an underſtanding heart to ſignify to us, that God is not wanting to men, but is in and with his calls, and by his goſpell converting, ſaving, reconciling, and making men wiſe, and of an underſtanding hearth: and therefore if they perish,

rish, their deſtruction is of themſelves, *Pſal.* 19. 7. *Act.* 3. 19, *Iſay.* 45. 22. 2 *Corint.* 5. 19, 20, *Prov.* 8. 5. by all which it evidently appeareth, that men may in due time finde Wiſdome, and get underſtanding.

3. It alſo appeareth that men may finde, and get Wiſdome, and underſtanding, becauſe he not onely hath prepared it for men in Chriſt, and is giving it unto them in and with him; but alſo he hath made and confirmed great and precious promiſes, that in our ſeeking and ſearching for it as thus prevented, we ſhall finde it, and get it: from this motive and argument our ſaviour exhorteth; *aske and ye ſhall receive: ſeek and ye ſhall finde, knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that ſeeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it ſhall be opened*, *Matth.* 7. 7, 8, 11. To the ſame purpoſe the Wiſdome of God ſpeaketh; if thou crieſt after Wiſdome, and lifteſt up thy voice for underſtanding; if thou ſeekeſt her as ſilver, and ſearcheſt for her as for hid treaſures; then ſhalt thou underſtand the feare of the Lord, and finde the knowledge of God. *For the Lord giveth Wiſdome; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and underſtanding*, *Prov.* 2. 1, 6. the ſame incouragement alſo the Apoſtle James ſets before the beleivers. *If any of you lack Wiſdome, let him aske of God that giveth liberally to all men, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him*, *Jam.* 1. 5. ſee alſo, *Joh.* 4. 10. and 6. 27. *Prov.* 8. 14, 17. many promiſes of this nature are propoſed to us, to the end we might ſeek, and get Wiſdome; and faithfull is he that hath promiſed, who alſo will doe what he hath promiſed, according to the tenour thereof: and theſe promiſes are now confirmed to us by the precious and incorruptible blood of Chriſt; *for in him all the promiſes of God are yea and Amen*, 2 *Corint.* 1. 20. and he alſo who by his blood hath ratified, and ſealed them is alive, and lives for ever-

evermore as the mediatour of the New Teſtament, to take away our iniquities, and give unto us in his fathers way all things that pertaine to life and godlineſs, ſo as none that ſeek Wiſdome, or any other good thing, ſhall be ashamed, *Hebr.* 9. 14, 15. *Pſal.* 69. 6.

And this conſideration, that men may, while called to day, finde and get Wiſdome, and underſtanding, as is in part thus evidenced, may be uſefull to us, and uſefully conſidered by us.

1. To help us to ceaſe to heare thoſe inſtructions that cauſe to erre from the words of knowledge, *Prov.* 19. 27. namely, ſuch inſtructions as whereby ſinners intice us to caſt in our lot amongſt them, and to walk in the way with them; to run with them to the ſame exceſs of riot, in laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of wine, revellings, banquettings, &c. *Prov.* 1. 10,20. 1 *Petr.* 4. 1, 4. to have fellow ship with them in their unfruitfull workes of darkneſs. Aſwel as alſo to goe from the preſence of ſuch foolish and falſe teachers as have not in them the lip of knowledge, *Prov.* 14. 7. both of ſuch as ſay, there is no reſurrection of the dead; and ſo by conſequence that Chriſt is not raiſed againe: As thoſe that ſay, that Chriſt is in every man, and that the light in every man is Chriſt; and deny that Chriſt is raiſed againe in that very perſonall body in which he was crucified, and died for our ſins according to the ſcriptures; and was buried: theſe ungodly doctrines render it altogither unprofitable for us to ſeek Wiſdome, and impoſſible to get underſtanding: for if Chriſt be not raiſed againe in that body of his flesh in which he was delivered for our offences, we are yet in our ſins, and the faith of beleivers is vaine; and the preaching of the Apoſtles is alſo vaine; then they are found falſe witneſſes of God, then is the hope of the goſpel vaine; then let us eat and drinke for to morrow we dye; but thoſe are ungodly, and anti-

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chriſtian ſayings; for Chriſt is raiſed againe, his ſoule was not left in hell, neither did his flesh ſee corruption, 1 *Corint.* 15. 12, 20. take we heed of ſuch falſe witneſſes as bring ſuch profane and vaine bablings. And alſo it may cauſe us to beware of thoſe falſe teachers who conſent not to wholeſome words, even the words of our Lord Jeſus; ſuch as ſay, Chriſt did not taſte death by the grace of God for every man, nor is raiſed againe for their juſtification; and ſo by conſequence there is no Wiſdome or underſtanding prepared for the greateſt part of mankind; theſe are falſe witneſſes alſo, who render it doubtfull whither Wiſdome may be gotten or no; yea who ſay in their doctrines, that it is vaine for the greateſt part of mankind to ſeek it, 2 *Petr.* 2. 1. *Jude* 3. Contrary to what theſe ungodly ones ſay, Wiſdome may be gotten; and he that getteth Wiſdome loveth his owne ſoule: he that keepeth underſtanding ſhall finde good: *And a falſe witneſs ſhall not be unpunished, and he that ſpeaketh lies ſhall perish.* *Prov.* 19. 5, 8, 9. 1 *Tim.* 6. 3, 5.

2. To ſhew unto us the folly and madneſs of thoſe that ſeek not Wiſdome, and get not underſtanding; the greatneſs of their ſin, and folly, and ſeverity of their judgement is manifeſted in what hath been ſaid; of Wiſdome were not prepared for them: or if they could not poſſibly be made partakers of it, they would have ſome cloke and excuſe; but now their ſin is inexcuſable; and it greatly provokes the king of glory to anger, that when he hath prepared his dinner, his oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, and they invited, they then make light of it, and goe their wayes, one to his farme, and another to his Merchandiſe, *Matth.* 22. 4, 8. this is mens great folly, and that which highly provokes God, that they hate knowledge, and will not chuſe the feare of the Lord, when he is calling upon them, and ſtretching

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forth his hand unto them; *Prov.* 1. 20, 29. Oh! that we may not be ſuch fooles, and ſo unwiſe, but may underſtand what the will of the Lord is, *Epheſ.* 5. 17. *Prov.* 1. 7.

3. To incourage and move us all to finde Wiſdome, and draw out underſtanding; it is prepared for us, and declared and given to us that we might ſeeke it; and aſſurance given to us in his great and precious promiſes that in ſeeking it early we ſhall finde it; oh let us therefore get Wiſdome, and with all our gettings get underſtanding, *Prov.* 4. 6. *ſeek we the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is neare, Iſay.* 55. 6. and to provoke us hereto, conſider the next inſtruction, viz.

3. That the preſent time is Gods opportunity for finding Wiſdome, and getting underſtanding. Whence the Wiſdome of God ſaith, *Now therefore hearken unto me o ye children, Prov.* 8. 32. we might branch this inſtruction into theſe two parts, and shew.

1. That the preſent time is the opportunity in which it is poſſible for us to get Wiſdome.

2. It is the opportunity in which it is good and needfull for us to get it.

1. The preſent time is the opportunity in which it is poſſible for us to get Wiſdome, therefore it is ſaid, *happy is the man that findeth, and getteth*; as ſignifying to us, that now while God is waiting upon us that he may be gracious to us, and vouchſafing meanes, we may ſeeke ſucceſs fully; and that is all the day long, while he is calling unto us. To him that in joyned to all the living there is hope, *Eccleſ.* 9. 4. While God heares Chriſt in his meditation for us, and that is all the time he makes interceſſion, he vouchſafeth ſome meanes to us; and while he vouchſafeth meanes, God ſuccours Chriſt in his miniſtration, and ſends forth his ſpirit; and, behold now is the accepted time, be-

behold now is the day of ſalvation; now we may receive his grace ſo as to be ſaved thereby, 2 *Corint.* 6. 1, 2. While God is exerciſing longſuffering to us, it is to a gracious end, and out of love to us, becauſe he is not willing that any man ſhould perish, but that all ſhould come to repentance; and hence the beleivers are inſtructed to account, that the longſuffering of our Lord is ſalvation, not deſtruction, 2 *Petr.* 3. 9, 15. Wiſdome is crying, and calling unto ſimple ones that love their ſimplicity; and to ſcorners that delight in ſcorning; and to fooles that hate knowledge, and have done ſo for a long time, to turne at her reproofes, with aſſurance, in ſo doing, ſhe will poure forth her ſpirith, and make knowne her words unto them: and while she calleth, she ſtretcheth forth her hand to help them to turne, *Prov.* 1.20,24. yea though men have forgotten him dayes without number, and ſo provoked him, as that he hath put them away, and they have ſold themſelves for their iniquities, yet while Chriſt calls unto them by his goſpell, or any meanes, his hand is not shortned that he cannot redeeme, but he hath power ſtill to deliver, and is ſtretching it forth to that end and purpoſe, *Iſay.* 50. 1, 2. and 65. 1, 2. and though we have long deſpiſed Wiſdome, yet to day, while it is called to day, we may ſeek and finde Wiſdome: the end of Chriſts dying for all, was, that they which live, and are ſtill joyned to all the living, might not hence forth live to themſelves, but to him who died for them, and roſe againe, 2 *Corint.* 5. 15. *Eccleſ.* 9. 10. and this conſideration may comfort us, and cauſe us to lift up the hands that hang downe, and to ſtrengthen the feeble knees: for though we have been ſuch fooles as hitherto to deſpiſe Wiſdome, and hate knowledge, yet while God is calling us, and continuing meanes to us, and eſpecially his ſervants to preach the goſpell, it is ſtill a

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time of finding, and getting Wiſdome; and he that ſo heares and learnes of the father as to come to Chriſt, he will in no wiſe caſt out, but will receive him graciouſly, pardoning his iniquities, *Joh.* 6. 37. And it might be powerfull alſo to awaken us to ſeek the Lord, to ſeek Wiſdome, and righteouſneſs while he is exerciſing patience, and forbearance to us, and crying to us to turne at his reproofes; and to ſtirre us up hereto, the next branch of the inſtruction is good to be conſidered by us, viz.

2. The preſent time is the opportunity in which it is good and needfull for us to ſeek and get Wiſdome and underſtanding: Wherefore as the Ho: Ghoſt ſaith, *to day if ye will heare his voice, harden not your hearts*, Hebr. 3. 7, 8, 14, 15. and 4. 7. *ſtrive now to enter in at the ſtrait gate, for many I ſay unto you*, ſaith our ſaviour, *ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able: When once the maſter of the houſe is riſen up, and hath ſhut too the doore, and ye begin to ſtand without, and to knock at the doore, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open unto us.* Then all pleadings and arguments will be in vaine; *he ſhall ſay, I tell you, I know you not whence you are*, *Luk.* 13. 24, 27. gather your ſelves therefore together, yea gather together, before the decree bring forth, before the day paſs as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lords anger come upon you, *Zephan.* 2. 1, 2.

Objection. If any one ſhould ſay, I am young, and ſtrong, and the evill day will not yet prevent, nor overtake me: I may now rejoyce in my youth, and let my heart cheere me; I may now ſeek after the world, and love the luſt of the flesh, mine eaſe and pleaſure: Or the luſt of the eye, in labouring to be rich, and laying up for my ſelfe and mine: Or the pride of life. I may hereafter apply my heart to Wiſdome; I know not yet how to be ſo ſerious; it will

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be time enough for that when old age cometh.

Answer. 1. To this I may say, this Objection savours of great ignorance, and folly, and want of consideration of the worth, and invaluable price of Wisdome: did we seriously consider that Wisdome is the principall thing; and that all the things we may, or can desire are not to be compared to her; as God is discovering the excellency of it, and opening our eyes to behold it; and that it is prepared for us, and may be found and gotten by us; it would be powerfull with us to seek it early, to seek first the kingdome of God, and the righteousnes thereof, to cry after it, and be restles in our spirits for it, and with all our gettings, and in all opportunities to seek after this one thing that is so profitable unto all things, *Prov.* 3. 15, 16, 17. and 4. 1, 8. and 8. 1. 6. 10, 11, 17. And therefore also.

2. It is safe good, and needfull to seek it in the present opportunity, and dangerous to neglect that. For.

1. If thou shouldest live to old age, it may be more difficult then to finde Wisdome then now becaus.

1. When old age cometh, then our naturally capacities and powers will be much weakned and impaired; and afflictions, and weaknesses are ordinarily so many, and so flowing in upon us like the waves of the sea, one in the neck of another, the clouds returning after the raine, that then we shall be more out of capacity to seek and get Wisdome, hence when the preacher had, by way of severe reproofe to such an Objector, said: *rejoyce ô young man in they youth, and let thy heart cheere the in the dayes of thy youth; and walk in the wayes of thine owne heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment, &c.* He addes: *Remember now thy creator in the dayes of thy youth, while the evill dayes come not, nor the yeares draw nigh when thou*

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ſhalt ſay, I have no pleaſure in them While the ſun or the light, or the Moone, or the Star be not darkned, nor the clouds returne after the raine, &c. *Eccleſ.* 11. 9, 10. and 12. 1, 7. it will then be more hard to heare, and ſeeke after Wiſdome, when we are preſt downe, and burdened with manifold paines, ſickneſſes, weakneſſes; and when alſo our naturall ſtrength is weakned; As is ſignified in what is ſaid of the Iſraëlites, when God ſent them word by the hand of Moſes that he would bring them out from. Under the burdens of the Egyptians; and rid them out of their bondage &c. yet they hearkned not unto Moſes for anguish of ſpirit, *Exod.* 6. 2, 9.

2. Then alſo it will be more hard, and difficult, to get underſtanding, becauſe they have been accuſtomed to doe evill: When it hath been mens manner from their youth to neglect Wiſdome, and deſpiſe inſtruction, and to ſeek after, and ſet their hearts upon the world, and the things thereof, this renders it more difficult with them to leave their old wayes, and practices, and cauſe their hearts to come to Wiſdome, according to that: *Can the Ethiopian change his skin? Or the Leopard his ſpots? then may ye alſo doe good that are accuſtomed to doe evill, Jerem.* 13. 23. Indeed with God all things are poſſible; nor doe I ſpeak this to diſcourage them that are old; but to awaken the young, and others before they are older, to break of their ſins, and forſake their unrighteous wayes and thoughts, and turne unto him who delighteth in mercy, and who will multiply to pardon. Nor doth the Holy Ghoſt uſe that ſaying fore mentioned *Jerem.* 13. 23. to ſignify, that it is impoſſible for them to learne to doe well, as he is giving grace unto them; for he; vers 27. thus ſtill expoſtulates with them; *wilt thou not be made cleane? When ſhall it once be?* As intimating, that God was yet waiting upon them, and

cleanſing them from the evill they had been accuſtoming themſelves unto: but he ſpeakes it, to the end he might ingage them to conſider their waies, and turne unto him: but continuance in evill makes it more difficult with us to depart there from, and to forſake our old lovers and companions, and to incline our hearts to Gods underſtanding, which we have ſo long deſpiſed, and ſet light by. What one is wont to doe, becomes at laſt, after a ſort, neceſſary for him to doe. As, whereas in *Matth.* 27. 15. it is ſaid, *Pilate was wont to releaſe unto the people a priſoner*; *it is* thus rendred; *Luk.* 23. 17. *of neceſſity he muſt releaſe unto them one at the feaſt.* As on the one hand, the holy ſpirit ſaith, traine up a child in the way in which he ſhould goe; and when he is old he will not depart there from, *Prov.* 22. 6. ſo on the other hand we may ſay, when we have been training up our ſelves in the days of our youth, and ſtrength in the ways in which we ſhould not goe, it becomes more hard with us to depart therefrom when we are old, 2 *Petr.* 2. 14. let this be conſidered by us.

3. Yea God may put an end to our harveſt time, I meane, to thoſe choice, and advantageous opportunites which yet in mercy he is cotinuing to us, if we continue in hating knowledge; and for ſuch wickedneſs; and then it will be more difficult to ſeeke Wiſdome: He may ſend a famine, not of bread, or a thirſt for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And men may wander from ſea to ſea, and from the north even unto the eaſt, and run to and fro to ſeek the word of the Lord, and not finde it: and in that day the faire virgins, and young men (who may have too much neglected the preſent opportunites) ſhall faint for thirſt, *Amos* 8. 11, 13. *Goe then to the Ant, thou ſluggard, conſider herways, and be wiſe; which having no guide, overſeer, or ruler provides her meat*

meat in the ſummer, and gathers her food in the harveſt, how long wilt thou ſleep, ô ſluggard, when wilt thou ariſe out of thy ſleep? Yet a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands to ſleep; ſo ſhall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man, Prov. 6. 6, 11. and 10. 5. O! if God ſhould ſend ſuch a famine upon us, as we have by our iniquities deſerved, that we may not then have cauſe to bewaile it with the Prophet, and ſay; *the harveſt is paſt, the ſummer ended, and we are not ſaved, Jerem. 8. 18, 20.*

4. Yea God may deprive us of all meanes, and leave ſtriving with us; or deprive us of capacity, that no man can be an inſtrument of good to us, for our manifold, and long continued in provocations of him, if we ſhould deferre ſeeking Wiſdome till the evill dayes come: He is not tied, or ingaged to us to wait our leiſure or pleaſure: and though he is rich in mercy, and abundant in goodneſs, yet it is dangerous *to deſpiſe the riches of his goodneſs, forbearance, and long ſuffering, Rom. 2. 4, 5.* his ſpirit ſhall not alwayes ſtrive with men, *Geneſ. 6. 3.* and if we ſhould provoke him to leave ſtriving, wo will be unto us; *No man can come to Chriſt, except the father who hath ſent Chriſt draw him, Joh. 6. 44.* doe we then provoke the Lord to anger? are we ſtronger then he? Who ever hardned his heart againſt him, and proſpered? oh that we may then be admonished to walk *while we have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon us; and while we have the light to believe in the light that we may be the children of the light, Joh. 12. 35, 36.* Nay.

2. Suppoſe thou ſhouldſt live to old age, and that then thorow the grace of God that brings ſalvation to all men, thine heart ſhould be turned to the Lord; yet it is much better now; and the preſent time is the moſt excellent opportunity for getting Wiſdome; becauſe.

1. The ſooner we apply our hearth to finde and get, & walk in Wiſdome, the more truly joyous and comfortable will be our life here in the flesh, to be ſpiritually minded in life and peace. *Rom.* 8. 6. Wiſdome is ſweet to the ſoule; life to the ſoule, and health to all the flesh, it doth good like a medicine. *Prov.* 24. 14. and 3. 21-24. and 4. 20. 21. and whatever afflictions ſuch meet withall as are found in this exerciſe; Whatever troubles they have in the flesh, and as to the outward man, yet they have a mercy heart, and thereby a continuall feaſt. *Prov.* 19, 8. and 15. 13-15. When they have tribulation in the World, they have peace in Chriſt who hath overcome the World; and ſuch peace guards their hearts as paſſeth all underſtanding. *Joh.* 16. 33. in beleiving God fills them with joy and peace, and ſuch joy as aſtranger intermedleth not with. *Rom.* 15. 13. *Prov.* 14. 8-10. Yea when they are in heavineſs thorow manifold temptations, yet beleiving what Chriſt hath done, and the hope ſet before them; and ſo in Chriſt; *They reioyce with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.* 1 Petr. 1. 6-8. Whereas the laughter of thoſe fooles that deſpice Wiſdome is but like the crackling of thornes under a pot; it makes a great shew, but is gone preſently, it is but for a moment, it vanisheth away in an inſtant. All the things men reioyce and truſt in, beſides the name of the Lord, and our God; Whither they be the more groſs luſts of the flesh, ſuch as ſurfetting, drunkneſs, uncleaneſs, eaſe and pleaſure: or the deſires of the mind, as covetouſneſs, pride, the honour of this World, the friendships, and praiſe of men; Wiſdome, or our owne workes of righteouſneſs, &c. they are all but ſparkes of our owne kindling, they are aſſoone out as in; There is no abiding comfort in them; And even in the laughter thereby occaſioned the heart is ſorrowfull, and the end of that mirth is heavineſs. *Eccleſ.* 5. 6. *Iſay.* 50. 10. 11. *Prov.* 14. 13.

14. 13. A dreadfull ſound is in their eares many times, trouble and anguish takes hold of them in Gods awakenings of them; and when they are recovered out of the ſnare of Satan, oh what shame is then upon them for their former evill wayes; They were unfruitfull to them while they walked in them, and now appeare exceeding shame full to them, when they reflect upon them: according to that, what fruit had ye *then* in thoſe things whereof ye are *now* ashamed? *Rom.* 6. 21. Oh how are they then filled with grife and ſorrow, both for their owne perſonall evills, and for the injury they have done to others! They will then mourne at the laſt and ſay, how have I hated inſtruction? And mine heart deſpiſed reproofe? And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine eare to them that inſtructed me I was almoſt in all evill in the midſt of the congregation, the great congregation, to which the Scriptures in the records of them are vouch ſafed, and amongſt which continued, & read every Sabbath, and upon which the name of Chriſt is called: and in the midſt of the aſſembly of the upright, that have been taught of God as the truth is in Jeſus, and love him, and without hidden things of diſhoneſty hold forth the word of life, and ſpeak often thereof one to another in their frequent aſſemblings of themſelves together; Which aggravates the evill of any, that have ſuch advantages, to deſpiſe Wiſdome. *Prov.* 5. 11-13. with *Pſal.* 111. 1. but contrariwiſe, the ſooner we ſearch for Wiſdome, and ſeek for underſtanding, the more comfortable will our lives be here; hence that; *come ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the feare of the Lord, which is the beginning and inſtruction of Wiſdome: What man is he that will love life, and ſee good dayes? keep thy tongue from evill, and thy lips from ſpeaking guile: depart from evill and doe good, ſeek peace and purſue it; for the eyes of the Lord*

are upon the richteous, &c. Pſal. 34. 11, 15. with, 1 *Petr.* 3. 9, 14.

2. And the earlier we ſeek Wiſdome, it will probably tend to more happineſs, or a greater degree of glory afterwards: men that delay the applying their hearts to underſtanding till the evill dayes come, they cannot have ſuch opportunity for exalting Wiſdome to others, and ſo doing them good, as thoſe that heartily imbrace it in their more youthfull dayes; and therefore not ſo much fruit will abound to their account in the day of the Lord. *They that are wiſe will ſhine as the firmament; and they that turne many to righteouſneſs as the ſtarres for ever andever, Dan.* 12. 3. But.

3. It is needfull for us to ſeek and get Wiſdome and underſtanding in the preſent time, and dangerous to neglect it; becauſe our times are not in our owne hands, but in the Lords; and we cannot boaſt our ſelves of the morrow, *for we know not what a day may bring forth, Prov.* 27. 1. *In Gods hand is the ſoule of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind. Job* 12. 10. and how many doth he cut off in their full ſtrength, being wholy at eaſe and quiet, whoſe breſts are full of milk, and their bones moiſtened, with Marrow? *Job* 21. 22 - 24. and if he cut of, or shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him? *Job* 9. 12. 13 *and* 11. 10. *and* 12. 14. *There is no man hath power over the Spirit to retaine the Spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no diſcharge in that warre; neither ſhall wickedneſs deliver thoſe that are given to it. Eccleſ.* 8. 8. And in the grave there is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor Wiſdome. *Eccleſ.* 9. 10. no hoping for Gods truth. *Iſay* 38. 18. None to preach the Goſpell, or to Commemorate Gods praiſes. *Pſal.* 6. 5. and 88. 11, 12. and 115, 17, 18. And beſides all this, the ſtate of man is then fixt for ever when they-

dye,

dye; there is then a great gulfe fixed, ſo that there is no paſſing from one place, or ſtate, to another no not forever; But as the tree falls ſo it lies, whither toward the ſouth, or toward the north: In the place where the tree falleth there it ſhall bee. *Luk.* 16.26. *Eccleſ.* 11.3. Let us conſider this according to what the Apoſtle *James* ſaith: *Go to now, ye that ſay, to day, or to morrow, we will goe into ſuch a city, and continue there a yeare, and buy, and ſell, and get gaine: Whereas you know not what will be on the morrow; for what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away. Therefore* (becauſe our lives are ſo uncertaine and brittle) *to him that knoweth to doe good, and doth it not* (in the preſent ſeaſon) *to him it is ſin. Jam.* 4.13.17. All that hath been ſaid doth in ſome meaſure ſhew, that it is good and needfull for us to ſearch diligently for Wiſdome, and underſtanding in the preſent opportunity: And it may be of uſefullneſs to us.

1. To ſhew unto us who are fooles indeed, even ſuch as procraſtinate, and delay their ſeeking Wiſdome; ſuch as know not, or take no notice of their time. *Eccleſ.* 8.5-7. They are more bruitish herein then many creatures that have no underſtanding: *The ſtork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times and the ſwallow, and the turtle, and the crane, obſerve the time of their coming: but my people, ſaith the Lord know not the judgement of the Lord: how doe ye ſay we are Wiſe? Jerem.* 8.7,9. ſuch are inſtructed to goe to the Ant, and conſider her wayes; though she be without the underſtanding that men have, yet she provideth her meat in the ſummer, in the proper ſeaſon; Whereas ſluggards, *Whom God teacheth more then the beaſts of the earth, and maketh wiſer then the foules of heaven*, obſerve not the proper time. *Job* 35.11. Nay herein alſo men are preferred before, or have greater advantages then

the ants, that weak people; they have no ruler, overſeer, ar guide; whereas generally we have ſome parent, or yoke fellow, or relation, or faitfull friend, to Counſell and provoke us to doe whatever our hand findeth to doe, with our might. *Prov.* 6. 6 - 10. *Eccleſ.* 9. 10.

2. It may exhort us all, not to have fellowship with men in their unfruitfull workes of darkneſs; but to redeeme the time, eſpecially when the dayes are evill, that we may underſtand what the will of the Lord is. *Epheſ.* 5. 11 - 17. and with David, to thinke on our wayes, and turne our feet to Gods teſtimonies; to make haſte, and not delay to keep Gods commandements *Pſal.* 119. 59, 60. And to ingage us hereto, conſider the laſt inſtruction noted in this Affirmation; Viz.

4. He is, and ſhall be an happy man that findeth Wiſdome, and getteth underſtanding: The tranſlatours have put in [is] and read, happy is the man; but it is more full, left out, and read; *Happy the man* that findeth Wiſdome, &c. namely, happy now and for ever. Happineſs is a deliverance from evill, and an injoyment of all good, according to that. *Pſal.* 84. 11, 12. the Lord God is a ſun and sheild, and will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly: Bleſſed (happy, as is evident in the former verſe) is the man that is in ſuch a caſe: ſo here. He that is and ſhall be thus happy, is ſuch an one as findeth Wiſdome, &c. Not that hath found ſimply; but to him that by patient continuance in welldoing ſeekes for glory, &c. *Rom.* 2. 7. to ſuch as alwayes abide in this exerciſe, and are not weary of welldoing; he that indureth to the end the ſame ſhall be ſaved. *Gal.* 6. 9. *Matth.* 10. 22. Otherwiſe all will be in vaine. Men may have run well in former times, and yet by ſome meanes be hindred from Obeying the truth: They may draw back, after they have begun well; and then during ſuch neglect

neglect of, or departure from this exercise, Gods soule shall have no pleasure in them. *Gal.* 3. 1-3. *and* 5. 7. *Hebr.* 10. 38. *When the righteous man turnes away from his righteousnes, and commits iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? Shall he be happy? All his righteousnes that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespas that he hath trespassed; and in his sin that he hath sinned in them shall he dye.* Ezek. 18. 24. *But she is a tree of life to all that lay hold on her, and happy is every one that retaineth her. He that getteth Wisdome loveth his owne soule, he that keepeth understanding shall finde good. Prov.* 3. 18. *and* 19. 8. Happy is such an one, and it shall be well with him for ever. *Psal.* 128. 1, 2. like to those sayings of our Saviour; *He that beleiveth on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Joh.* 3. 15, 16, 18, 36. He that cometh to me shall never hunger; he that abideth in me shall bring forth fruit; but if a man abide not in him, he is cast forth as a branch, and whitereth, and men gather them, and they are cast into the fire and burned. *Joh.* 6. 35. *and* 15. 1. 8. such an one then is the subject of this happines, even every one that cometh unto, and abideth in Christ. And every such an one is pronounced happy, not by the men of the World, the World knoweth not, owneth not, approveth them not, but looketh upon them as miserable ones; But by Wisdome, who is infinite in love, as manifested in that she hath built her house, and furnished her table, and invites all to heare, to come and be wise; and loves them with peculiar manner of love that from the discovery of her love, love her, and seek her early. *Prov.* 18. 17. *and* 9. 1-5. and she is infinite in power, as evidenced in that she made the heavens, and hath grapled with and overcome all our enemies; and all power is given to her; and therefore not onely saith, happy; But makes happy with her

word; he is bleſſed whom she bleſſeth, and shall be bleſſed, for ever. 1 *Chron.* 17. 27. Yea and she is faithfull, the opening of her lips are right things; for her mouth ſpeakes truth, and wickedneſs is an abomination to her lips; all the words of her mouth are in righteouſneſs, &c. *Prov.* 8. 6-10. all which are powerfull motives to liſten to, and receive her inſtruction, and take faſt hold thereon. And what the happineſs, and bleſſedneſs of every ſuch an one as findeth Wiſdome, and gets underſtanding is, and shall be, we shal give ſome account of in ſpeaking to the gaine thereof.

Thus though with, much weakneſs, I have ſpoken to the affirmation of the Ho: Ghoſt, which was the firſt thing propoſed to be conſidered in the beginning: and now come to ſpeake to the ſecond. Viz.

2. We have alſo in the words, a generall demonſtration, and evidence of the happineſs of ſuch a man as findeth Wiſdome, and getteth underſtanding. And a commendation of the exerciſe of finding, and getting; Laid downe as a motive and argument to ingage us to ſeeke, that we may finde and get it. *For the Marchandiſe of it is better then the Merchandiſe of Silver, and the gaine thereof then fine gold. Verſ.* 14.

In which Demonſtration, and Commendation is ſignified to us in generall.

1. That that which renders a man happy in the account of Wiſdome, is ſomewhat that is more excellent then ſilver, or gold, or any thing in cluded therein, or to be had, and injoyed thereby; therefore it is not ſaid, happier, or happieſt, is the man, but poſitively, happy the man, For the Merchandiſe of Wiſdome is better, &c. it muſt be ſomewhat better then gold and ſilver, that will make a man happy. Though money anſwers all things here. *Eccleſ.* 10. 19. Yet it will not make a man truly happy; nor all the things beſides this

this excellent Wiſdome we can deſire. *Prov.* 3. 15. a man may be, and is, an un happy, miſerable piteous creature, though he should gaine the whole world if he be without Wiſdome, for he will loſe his owne ſoule. *Matth.* 16. 26, 27. *Prov.* 19. 8. Silver and gold is ſo farre from making a man happy, and bleſſed indeed, that the abundance of it which he poſſeſſeth will not make the naturall life comfortable, nor continue it. *Luk.* 12. 15. *Deut.* 30. 20. It is Chriſt Jeſus, the Wiſdome that is from above, in whom there is bleſſing for all the nations, and families of the earth; in whom are treaſured up all ſpirituall bleſſings in heavenly things. *Geneſ.* 22. 18. *Act.* 3. 25. *Epheſ.* 1. 3. and he that hath and findes him is bleſſed indeed, and shall be bleſſed. *Prov.* 8. 33. 34. Iſrael, who have the God of Jeshurun for their help, who are juſtified, and glory in the Lord, are an happy people, and there is none like unto them herein, namely, none beſides them happy: though others may have an abundance of the World in their poſſeſſions, yet he that beleiveth not the ſon shall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. *Deut.* 33. 26-29. *Joh.* 3. 36. *Prov.* 29 18. *Pſal.* 144. 15 *and* 146. 5. there is, as before is ſaid, bleſſing in Chriſt for all nations, that which will make a man happy; but this is onely received in receiving him, which any man may doe while God is calling, and ſtretching forth his hand; but though a man had all the ſilver and gold in the World, yet if he ſinneth againſt this Wiſdome, and hates her, he wrongs his owne ſoule, and loves death; And is therefore a moſt miſerable man; ſuch an one is oppoſed to the bleſſed and happy man. *Prov.* 8. 36. with *verſ.* 34. And this conſideration might be uſefull to us.

1. To shew unto us the folly of ſuch as labour for ſilver and gold, as if happineſs conſiſted therein; and account themſelves, and others happy in the injoyment

ment of it; The covetous man bleſſeth himſelfe, but the Lord abhorreth him. *Pſal.* 10. 3. indeed, our Wiſdome which is earthly, leades us to labour to be rich in thoſe uncertaine, and deceitfull riches, as if they would render us bleſſed in the poſſeſſing of them: *Prov.* 23. 4. and cauſeth them that have the riches of this World to ſay, bleſſed be the Lord, for I am rich; as is they were therefore happy; or as if this were an undoubted evidence of Gods peculiar love to them, *Zach.* 11. 5. but they are miſerably Miſtaken; he that had ſuch an a bundance of this Worlds good that he wanted roome where to beſtow it, was yet but a foole; and ſo is every one that layeth up treaſure for himſelfe, and is not rich toward God, *Luk.* 12. 16, 20.

2. It may help us to take heed, and beware of covetouſneſs, and not to love the World, nor the things that are in the World; for whoſoever ſo doth, the love of the father is not in him, 1 *Joh.* 2. 15, 17. why should we ſet our affections upon, and luſt after thoſe things in which happineſs conſiſteth not? this argument the Apoſtle uſeth to take off the beleivers from covetouſneſs. If ye then be riſen with Chriſt ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand of God; ſet your affection on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life (your happineſs) is hid, (not in the things on the earth, but) with Chriſt in God. When Chriſt who is our life shall appeare, then shall we appeare with him in glory; Mortify therefore your members on the earth. Covetouſneſs, *Coloſ.* 3. 1, 3, 5.

3. It may make us ſober in our exerciſe about the things of this world; and let the Moderation of our mind be knowne to all men, in all theſe things, *Philip.* 4. 5. and eſpecially ſeing the end of all things is at hand, it may cauſe us to be ſober, that we may watch unto prayer, and attend upon the Lord without diſtraction,

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for the things here below will not make us happy; 1 *Petr.* 4.7. 1 *Corint.* 7.29,35. the things here below may cumber and diſtract us, but *one thing* is needfull for us to be fervently ſought after by us, even this ſound Wiſdome, and excellent underſtanding. *Luk.* 10.39-42.

4. Seing ſilver and gold will not make us happy, and that Wiſdome will onely doe ſo, even this heavenly Wiſdome, it may ingage us to get Wiſdome; and with all our gettings to get underſtanding.

2. In this Demonſtration, and Commendation, is alſo in generall ſignified to us; that the way of the Ho: Ghoſt for taking us of from thoſe things that are uncertaine, and unprofitable, is, to ſet better things before us; He doth noth ſimply forbid us to love the World and things that are in, and of the World; But to redeeme us from them, and from our vain converſation, he propoſeth to, and ſets before us the precious blood of Chriſt, and what thereby he hath effected and obtained, and is become, that he might out bid all other things. 1 *Petr.* 1.18, 19. Wiſdome had before admonished us not to leane to our owne underſtanding. *Verſ.* 5. Now that she might prevaile with us to receive that admonition, and ceaſe from our owne Wiſdome, she here propoſeth to us a Wiſdome, and underſtanding that is infinitely better, more rich, and inriching. So when the Apoſtle had been crying downe the Wiſdome of the wiſe, and underſtanding of the prudent, that no flesh might glory in Gods preſence, but be willing to become fooles, he ſaith, Chriſt is made of God Wiſdome. And, ſaith he, how be it, though we come not with excellency of ſpeech, or of Wiſdome, but have shewne that God hath made foolishneſs the Wiſdome of this World, Yet we preach Wiſdome, &c. 1 *Cor.* 1. 17-31. *and* 2. 1-8. to the end that we might in beholding, and conſidering that better, and more precious, and profitable Wiſdome,

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part with and ceaſe from our owne, which is bruitish, and not onely unprofitable, but hurtfull. In like manner, that we might be broken off from our covetouſneſs, from affecting, and luſting after the riches of this World; and from ſeeking after the honour of this World; the Wiſdome of God aſſures us, that riches and honour are, with her, yea durable riches, and righteouſneſs; that her fruit is better then gold, yea then fine gold, and her revenue then choice ſilver. That in her left hand are riches and honour; that we might hearken unto her, and be crucified to the World, and come unto her to be inriched by her; and in a patient continuance in Weldoing ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality; That honour which hath immortality joyned with it, which the honor we may receive from men hath not, *Prov.*8. 10, 18, 20. and 3. 16. *Rom.* 2.7. ſo to take us off from rejoycing, or truſting in our owne workes of righteouſneſs, Chriſt Jeſus by his ſpirite ſets before us the righteouſneſs of God without the law; or without the works, or ſacrifices thereof, even that righteouſneſs which is manifeſted by the faith of Chriſt to be for and unto *all*, and upon all them that beleive; that we might count all our owne righteouſneſſes as filthy raggs, and as loſs and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt, that we might win him and be found in him, *Rom.* 3. 20, 22. *Gal.*2. 15, 16, 21. *Philip.*3.7,9. *Hebr.*10.32,34. *Prov.*16.16. and 8.18.

1. This conſideration then ſhewes unto us, the willingneſs, and cordiallneſs of Chriſt, that we might be partakers of him, and of that excellent proviſion treaſured up in him for all mankind.

2. It ſhewes the bruitishneſs of thoſe men who ſpend their money for that which is not bread, and labour for that which ſatisfieth not; ſeing God hath prepared for us, and ſets before us that which is good and fatneſs, and which will give to us reall ſatisfaction, and render

render us truly happy. *Iſay*. 55. 1-3. O that we may none of us by following lying vanities forſake our owne mercies. *Jonah*. 2. 8.

More particularly in this Demonſtration and evidence of the happineſs of the man that findeth Wiſdome, and getteth underſtanding; and commendation of the exerciſe therabout, is ſignified to us.

1. That to the end we may finde, and get Wiſdome, as referring to the former verſe; and have the gaine of it, as referring to the latter end of this verſe; We muſt firſt uſe Merchandiſe.

2. That the Merchandiſe of Wiſdome is better then the Merchandiſe of ſilver; and the gaine thereof then fine gold.

1. That to the end we may find, and get Wiſdome, and have the gaine of it, we muſt firſt uſe Merchandiſe. This excellent, and beneficiall treaſure is prepared for us, and declared to us, without and before any thing be required of us, as is before shewne: But that we may partake of it, and its benefit ſomewhat is required of us as God is enabling us. There is firſt good prepared for men, and shewed to them, before any thing be required of them. *Mica*. 6. 8. But then there are commandments given to us by the Lord Jeſus. The husbandman muſt firſt labour, ſaith the Apoſtle, before he be partaker of the fruit; *Conſider what I ſay, and the Lord give thee an underſtanding in all things*. 2 *Tim*. 2. 5-7. Hence our Saviour ſaith, *Labour not for the meat that periſheth, but for that which indureth unto everlaſting life, which the Son of Man will give unto you*, (in thus exerciſing your ſelves) *Joh*. 6. 27-29. It is in this alſo, and moſt certainely true; *The diligent hand maketh rich; and the ſoule of the diligent ſhall be made fat; but the ſoule of the ſluggard deſireth, and hath nothing, the idle ſoule ſhall ſuffer hunger*. *Prov*. 10. 4, 5. *and* 13. 4. *and* 19. 15. *and* 20. 4. Hence ſuch precepts are given to us. *Prov*. 4. 5-7.

4. 5, 7, and 6. 6, 11. In this inſtruction then we ſhall briefly inquire and conſider.

1. What is this Merchandiſe here commended to us?

2. Why it is called, and compared to Merchandiſe?

1. What is this Merchandiſe here commended to us, and what is needfull hereto? to this we have ſpoken already, and ſhall therefore breifly ſay.

1. There is contained in it, and needfull to it, an hearing, and learning of the father, that we may know where it is, and is to be had by us, and the excellency of it, that we may ſeek it, and in the right place; *how ſhall we beleive on him of whom we have not heard? Rom.* 10. 14, 17, 18. that the ſoule be without knowledge it is not good, and we canoot know unleſs we heare and learne of God; naturally we are ignorant, and know not Gods name, or his Sons name, but every word of God is pure, *Prov.* 30. 4, 5. let every man therefore be ſwift to heare the word of truth; and to heare in hearing: to learne of Chriſt to know him, who is made knowne to us in the holy ſcriptures and in his ordinances, and in the aſſemblies of his people, let us then bow downe our eares; and heare the words of the wiſe, *Jam.* 1. 18, 19. *Prov.* 22. 19. and 8. 33. and 19. 2.

2. There is diligence, and induſtry, eſpecially of the ſoule, to be uſed, and exerciſed, that we may get, and be made partakers of it; to wit, an exerciſing our ſelves in the law of the Lord day and night; as is ſaid of the vertuous and wiſe Woman; *ſhe girdeth her loines with ſtrength, and ſtrengthneth her armes; when ſhe perceiveth her Merchandiſe is good; her candle goeth not out by night*, *Prov.* 31. 17, 18. ſo there is requiſite hereto, and contained herein, a diligent ſeeking, and ſerious ſearching for, and earneſt drawing out this ſound Wiſdome; and a ſafe laying it up, and keeping it, when we have found it, and thereto reading,

ding, and ſearching the Scriptures of truth, meditating therein, praying unto God to open our eyes, and give us Wiſdome; and as we finde his words to eat them, that they may be the joy and reioycing of our hearts. *Matth.* 13.45. *Joh.* 6.27. *Matth* 6.33. *Prov.* 8.17, 18.

2. Now this ſpirituall exerciſe may be called, and compared to Merchandiſe.

1. To ſignify to us, that this excellent commodity of Wiſdome, and underſtanding is not in our ſelves, as is before noted; we muſt ſeeke it elſewhere, even without us in Chriſt Jeſus, as declared to us in the goſpell. As thoſe things that merchants ſeek after, they have them not of their owne, but the merchants ships bring their commodites from a farre, *Prov.* 31.14. ſo this Wiſdome is above, and farre of from us; and the tidings of it is good newes from a farre countrey. *Prov.* 25.25. in us, that is, in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing; we have no ſound wiſdome, or underſtanding in us; there is none that underſtandeth. *Rom.* 3.10, 11. and 7.18. but theſe treaſures are hid in Chriſt; and yet they are brought nigh to us in the word of faith; and in the preaching of it they are in our mouthes, and in our hearts, that we might receive them; they are brought to us in the Scriptures, and in the opportunities we have to heare the goſpell, as commodities, are brought nigh to men in a mart, or market: But we are without this Wiſdome naturally, and from our firſt bith. Thoſe are ungodly, and antichriſtian ſpirits who ſay, the true light, Chriſt, is in every man; for Chriſt is in heaven, and no otherwiſe had but in receiving him, even in beleiving on his name. *Joh.* 1.12. and he that heareth, and learneth of the Father cometh unto him; and therefore he is naturally at a diſtance from him. *John* 6.45.

2. It is called, and compared to Merchandiſe, to inſtruct us, that we muſt part with ſomewhat, that we

may have this excellent pearle, as alſo before is ſaid. Commodities are ſold to, and therefore muſt be bought by the Merchants, before they have them, or ſomewhat muſt be parted with by the Merchant for them. *Prov.* 31. 24. *The Kingdome of Heaven is like unto a Merchant man ſeeking goodly pearles* (a good heart, good frames, and qualifications) *who when he had found one pearle of great price* (Chriſt in the goſpell in whom dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily, and in whom is all good) *he went and ſold all that he had* (all his former riches righteouſneſs, confidences, hopes for Heaven, markes, ſignes, &c. *and bought it.* Matth. 13. 45, 46. Indeed, herein alſo is a difference between the earthly and heavenly Merchandiſe: The Merchants of this World part with ſomewhat uſually that is in ſome meaſure worthy, or judged worthy of the commodity; But we have no worth, nor worthineſs, and therefore can parth with, nothing which may in the leaſt be of like value with Wiſdome: And therefore he that hath no mony is invited to buy, and to buy without money and price. *Iſay.* 55. 1. Yet we muſt buy Wiſdome, and underſtanding. *Prov.* 23. 23, and to that end we muſt forſake all that we have. *Luk.* 14. 33.

3. This ſpirituall exerciſe is likened to Merchandiſe alſo, becauſe as in the earthly Merchandiſe a man meets with many troubles, and ſtormes; Their trading being much upon the ſea; and they being placed neare the ſea. *Ezek.* 27. 3. They meet with many boiſterous windes, and troubleſome ſeas, which many times doe affright them, and threaten danger to them: So alſo in ſeeking after this ſound Wiſdome, *Many are the afflictions of the righteous. Pſal.* 34. 17-19. They have many contrary windes of evill doctrines annoying them, and hindering them in this purſuit, and indeavouring to corrupt them, and draw them off from

from liſtening to Wiſdome, and ſeeking, and getting underſtanding. *Prov.* 9. 1-6. 13-17. They are indeavouring to toſs them to and fro. *Epheſ.* 4. 14. that they might drive them back, or cauſe them to come into their pretended harbour, which will not indeed ſecure them. *Gal.* 5. 7. *Prov.* 7. 1-18. and many ſtormes they meet with from violent dealars, and profane ones; many frownes and flatteries, many ſcoffs, reproaches, and deriſions; many threats, and actuall troubles, and bodily perſecutions alſo; impriſonments, ſpoilings of their goods, loſs of liberty, name, yea and life alſo, when their enemies have permiſſive commiſſion given to them. *Matth.* 10. 38, 39. So that, as it is needfull for us in coming unto, and following Chriſt Jeſus to deny our ſelves, and ſell all that we have; So alſo it is needfull to take up our croſs daily, and follow him. *Luk.* 14. 26, 27. *Matth.* 16. 24. Such as uſe this Merchandiſe muſt exſpect to meet with manifold ſtormes and tempeſts; The flouds of the ungodly lift up, they lift up their voice, they lift up their Waves. *Pſal.* 18. 4, 5. and 93. 3, 4. They shall be hated of all men, and ſuffer Perſecution, who will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus. *Matth.* 10. 22. 2 *Tim.* 3. 12, 13. Yea and their Lord and Maſter will be more abundantly trying, correcting, and chaſtening them, not to diſcourage them in their way, but to purify them, and try them, and make them white to the time of the end: The raine will deſcend, upon them, and the floods beat, and the windes blow: and it is good, and needfull for them to know this, who reſolve to exerciſe themſelves in this Merchandiſe, that when perſecutions & afflictions ariſe for the goſpell ſake, they may not be offended, or count it ſtrange concerning the fiery triall, as if ſome ſtronge thing happened unto them. *Luk.* 14. 25, 26-33. 1 *Peter* 4. 12. *Matth.* 7. 24, 25.

4. This is Merchandiſe, becauſe gaine is aimed at,

and may lawfully be propoſed by us: Thoſe that uſe Merchandiſe in this World doe it to this end, that they may inrich themſelves by their traffique, and trading. *Ezek.* 27. 12. and 28. 5. in all labour there is profit aimed at, and ſought after. *Prov.* 14. 23. and indeed this is the great thing the Merchants of the earth propoſe to themſelves, that they may inrich themſelves; and therefore they willingly adventure, and indure many ſtormes, and goe thorow much foule weather. *Revelat.* 18. 11-17. 23. So alſo thoſe that trade for, and in this heavenly commodity, may have reſpect to the recompence of the reward, to that gaine which is better then that of fine gold: the hope of this is that which cauſeth them to labour, and ſuffer reproach; and *forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things that are before, to preſs toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus. Philip.* 3. 13, 14. This is the motive the faithfull and true witneſs uſeth, to ingage thoſe who were wretched, and miſerable, and poore, and blind, and naked, to liſten to his counſell, and buy his commodities, becauſe they were gainfull, to wit, gold tried in the fire wherewith they might be made rich, and white raiment, &c. *Revelat.* 3. 17, 18. and becauſe of this gaine propoſed, they who are ſpirituall, and heavenly Merchants, are ſtrengthned to beare up againſt all ſtormes, and to hoiſe up their ſailes in all foule weather, and not to faint, but ſet their faces like a flint, knowing that their light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for them a farre more exceeding eternall weight of glory, While they look not on the things that are ſeen, but on the things which are not ſeen. 2 *Corinth.* 4. 16-18. They doe not ſo obſerve the wind as to be diſcouraged, but the gaine being ſo ſweet, and delightfull, it cauſeth them to trade, that they might get more knowledge of Chriſt, and God

in

in him, more acquaintance with him, and conformity to him; that they might adde to their faith vertue; and to vertue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godlineſs; and to godlineſs brotherly kindneſs; and to brotherly kindneſs charity; and that their pound might gaine five or ten pound; and that at laſt they might be made partakers of the hope of eternal life, *Luk.* 19. 15, 18. this makes them lanch out into the deep amidſt the waves, and billowes of the ſea, and to feare no weather, becauſe they know they ſhall reap in joy; and at laſt partake of that glory which eye hath not ſeen, nor eare heard, nor hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive; this hope ſaves them, and ſtrengthens them with patience to wait, and with reſolution to hold on their way, and not to feare what flesh can doe unto them; and this gaine makes them willing to count as loſs thoſe things that formerly were gainfull to them; and to ſel, and part with all, that by any meanes they may attaine the reſurrection of the dead: no ſtormes, or blaſts they muſt indure, and paſs thorow; no goodly things they muſt forgoe, and part with; no flatteries and inticements they meet withall, move them, while the eye is fixed on this great gaine: but he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelfe, even as he is pure, *Act.* 20. 19, 24. 1 *John.* 3. 1, 3.

5. This exerciſe may be compared to merchandiſe, becauſe we ſhould ſeek after this heavenly Wiſdome, that we might impart it to others: thus it is with the merchants of the earth; they adventure for commodities, and buy them, that they may ſell, and get gaine, as before: and here in merchants are differenced from many other buyers; many others buy for themſelves, and their owne uſe onely; or for their owne families: But Merchants buy not commodities

for themſelves, and their families onely, but that they may ſell to others, to any that will buy of them; and this is part of their trade and traffique. *Ezek.* 27. 33, 34. So thoſe wiſe, and ſpirituall Merchants should ſeek and get Wiſdome and underſtanding, not for themſelves, or their families onely, though eſpecially they are to ſeek their good; and to teach and inſtruct their Children diligently; and to talk unto them when they ſit in the houſe, &c. *Deut.* 6. 4-9. But they are alſo to impart Wiſdome to others; I ſay not, ſell it, however not in ſuch a ſenſe as to part with it, and let in goe; the Ho: Ghoſt hath inſtructed us to buy the truth, and not ſell it, *Prov.* 23. 23. but to diſperſe it, as inſtruments in the hand of God, to others: this is the exerciſe of wiſe men, and hereby they ſtill grow richer, according to that, in the houſe of the righteous is much treaſure; the lips of the wiſe diſperſe knowledge (hereby they are more filled with treaſure, to him that hath shall be given) but the heart of the foolish doth not ſo, *Prov.* 15. 6, 7. this is the way for merchants to grow rich, to diſperſe their commodities to others; and hereby shall the wiſe merchant increaſe knowledge; the more he ſcattereth, the more he increaſeth; the liberall ſoule shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered alſo himſelfe, *Prov.* 11. 24-26. Chriſts diſciples are the light of the World; and are inſtructed to shine as lights in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe nation, holding forth the word of life in word and converſation, *Philip.* 2. 14-16. this liberty and authority he hath given them, who taught them their trade, and committed to them his goods, and gave them ability to traffique therewith; I meane, he who is king of ſaints, who is their judge, to plead their cauſe, and right their wrongs, and juſtify them when thy are unjuſtly condemned; Who is alſo their Law-giver, and Statute-

maker;

maker; Whoſe lawes they ought to obſerve, and according to whoſe ſtatutes they are to act, and by which to be judged: And who is their king, to ſave them from all evill, and enemies; and to help them as the needs of their matters require, *Iſay.* 33. 22. And if any of them should forbeare to exalt, and promote Wiſdome to others, becauſe they are forbidden by men; or becauſe danger threatens them; or on what account ſoever they hide their talents, it will tend to their great dammage, if not to their utter undoing; from him that hath not shall be taken away that which he hath; thoſe who are unprofitable ſervants shall be caſt into utter darkneſs, where shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth, *Luk.* 19. 26. *Matth.* 13. 12. and 25. 29, 30. their Apoſtle, and the Bishop of their ſoules, hath inſtructed them, to exhort one another daily; and as they have received the gift, ſo to miniſter, as good ſtewards, &c. *Hebr.* 3. 1, 13. 1 *Petr.* 4. 10. with *Chap.* 5. 1. 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 11, 12. and thoſe that are indeed Wiſe merchants are found in this exerciſe, to invite others to this excellent commodity: the ſpirit and the bride ſay come: and let him that heareth ſay, come; and whoſoever will let him come, and take of the water of life freely, *Iſay.* 55. 1. *Revel.* 22. 16, 17. the very end wherefore they are brought into ſo neare a relation to Chriſt, and have this treaſure committed to them, is, that they might shew forth the praiſes of him who hath called them out of darkneſs into his marvellous light, and call others into Wiſdom's houſe, that they in eatingh her bread may be wiſe alſo, 1 *Petr.* 2. 4-9. *Prov.* 9. 1-6. with 2 *Corint.* 11. 2. and *Revel.* 14. 4.

6. And this may be compared to merchandiſe, becauſe this ſpirituall exerciſe of theirs should be their trade, as it were, their daily and continuall imployment. As the merchandiſe of the merchants of the

and getting underſtanding, may be called, and compared to merchandiſe.

2. We come in the next place to ſhew.

1. That the merchandiſe of Wiſdome, and underſtanding, is better then the merchandiſe of ſilver.

2. And the gaine there of then fine gold.

1. The merchandiſe of Wiſdome, and underſtanding is better then the merchandiſe of ſilver. And this appeareth.

1. Becauſe the commodity that is here traded for, even this excellent Wiſdome, and underſtanding, is better, infinitely better, unſpeakably, yea inconceivably more excellent thenſilver and gold: *She is more precious then rubies, and all the things thou canſt deſire are not to be compared unto her*, *Prov.* 3. 15. They are accounted amongſt men the beſt merchants of the earth, who trade for, and in, the moſt rich, and excellent wares; and their merchandiſe is eſteemed more excellent then the merchandiſe of thoſe that traffique in meane, and inconſiderable things: Now therefore the merchandiſe of the wiſe merchant muſt needs be moſt excellent, becauſe he ſeekes after a pearle of great, yea of the greateſt price. *How much better is it to get Wiſdome then gold! and to get underſtanding rather to be choſen then ſilver*, *Prov.* 16. 16. Man knowes not the price thereof, the price it coſt, or the worth of this heavenly riches *it cannot be gotten for gold neither ſhall ſilver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of ophir with the precious Onyx, or the Japphire; the gold and the cryſtall cannot equall it; and the exchange of it ſhall not be for jewells of fine gold: No mention ſhall be made of corall, or of Pearles, for the price of Wiſdome is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia ſhall not equall it neither ſhall it be valued with pure gold. Job.* 28. 13--19. Wiſdome, even Chriſt Jeſus, is the principall thing: And the law of his mouth is better then

earth is their trade, their continued practice: other men may ſometimes buy what the merchant doth, but they are not therefore reckoned, or accounted merchants; but they are accounted, and are ſuch, who continue to buy and ſell, that they may get gaine, *Ezek.* 27. 13-24. ſo they are wiſe merchants who with al their gettings get underſtanding, *Prov.* 4. 7. and they are ſaid to uſe merchandiſe becauſe they trade in, and with this heavenly riches: So he that had received the five talents, went and *traded* with the ſame, and made them other five talents; and likewiſe he that had received the two, &c. *Matth.* 25. 16, 17. To the ſame purpoſe it is ſaid in another Parable, that a certaine Noble man delivered ten pounds to his ten ſervants, and ſaid unto them, *Occupy till I come*; this was to be their continuall worke and imployment. And when he was returned, he called unto him his ſervants to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by *trading*, *Luk.* 19. 12-15. this ſpirituall merchandiſe is not an hearing ſometimes, and ſeeking ſometimes Wiſdome, but the making it ones buſineſs; and happy are ſuch ſervants whom their Lord when he cometh ſhall finde ſo doing; according to that, *bleſſed is the man that heareth me* (not that hath heard for a little ſeaſon, but continues ſo doing) *watching daily at my gates, waiting at the poſts of my doores*, *Prov.* 8. 34. happy are thoſe ſervants who run to and fro that they may, grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt; Who follow on to know, that they may know the Lord, win him, and be found in him; and who are ſhewing forth God's righteouſneſs, and his ſalvation all the day; and walking in the ſtrength of the Lord God, making mention of his righteouſneſs, even of his onely, *Pſal.* 71. 14-24. In ſuch like reſpects, this finding Wiſdome,

and

thouſands of gold and ſilver. *Prov.* 4.6. *Pſ.* 119. 72,127. *There is gold, and a multitude of Rubies, but the lips of knowledge are a Precious jewell, Prov.* 28. 15. Yea this Pearle is better then that which many zealous, and religious Merchants, are ſeeking after: They are ſeeking goodly pearles, they are ſeeking firſt ſome brokenes of heart, ſome love to God and men; ſome marks, and frames, that from thence they may conclude Chriſt died for them, and God loves them; they are ſeeking after ſome knowledge of God, zeale for God, hatred of ſin, and victory over their corruptions, as it were by the Work, of the law, and before they dare come to Chriſt; and to this end they labour, and are heavy laden, and weary themſelves in vaine, and to no purpoſe. But this is a pearle of great price, even Chriſt as declared in the gospell, in and with whom God gives all things; here he gives wisdome, and underſtanding to us, hereby he quickens to a lively hope; by him he gives repentance, and forgiveneſs of ſins, here he gives the manifeſtation of his love to us before we love him; he is the fountaine of all grace and truth: Hence the Wiſe merchant who was ſeeking goodly pearles, when he found this one pearle of great price, went and ſold all that he had and bought it, *Matth.* 13. 45, 46. *Philip.* 3. 4, 9. Chriſt is made of God Wisdome, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption: Yea he is all in the new creation, that wemight come unto him, and of his fullneſs receive, grace for grace. 1 *Corinth.* 1. 30. *Coloſ.* 3. 11. O that we did in deed know his excellency, and comelineſs! That we might receive his inſtruction and not ſilver: And knowledge rather then choice gold. *For Wisdome is better then rubies, and all the things that may* (Poſſibly, and lawfully) *be deſired, are not to be compared to it. Prov.* 8. 10,11.

2. The merchandiſe or exercise, in ſeeking, getting,

ting, and drawing out this Wisdome and underſtanding is better then the merchandiſe of ſilver. For

1. It is more honorable in the ſight of God and all good men; The merchandiſe of the earth is in eſteeme among men; and thoſe that uſe it are ſome of them, princes, and the honorable of the earth. *Iſay.* 23. 8. 2 *Chron.* 8.27, 28. *Revel.* 18.23. But this is more honourable, not in the ſight and account of fooles, but in the judgement of him who is perfect in knowledge, and of thoſe who are taught of, and led by him truly God hath no high account of the riches of this World, nor of thoſe that labour for them. Will he eſteeme thy riches? no not gold, nor all the forces of ſtrength. *Job.* 36. 19 *Prov.* 23. 4. But thoſe that honour him, who preferre him above all other things, and heare Chriſt Jeſus (for he that honoureth not the ſon, honours not the father that hath ſent him) he will honour, he will greatly, and highly eſteeme them, both now and here after: And thoſe that deſpiſe him, and love their gold or ſilver, or children above him, shall be lightly eſteemed, 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. Hence we have this motive propoſed, to ingage and prevaile with us to get Wisdome, and underſtanding, she shall bring thee to honour (not onely hereafter but) when thou doſt imbrace her *Prov.* 4. 5-8. *the way of life is above to the wiſe it is above any other way, that he may depart from hell beneath*, *Prov.* 15. 24. the converſation of ſuch is in heaven; and they are minding, and trading for, and in heavenly things, *Philip.* 3. 19, 20. and as high as heaven is above the earth, ſo anſwerably the exerciſe of thoſe that are ſeeking after, and dwelling in heaven, is higher then the Merchandiſe of thoſe who ſeek gold and ſilver: aud indeed to be the ſervant of Chriſt in this exerciſe is the higheſt honour, and moſt honourable ſervice, and exerciſe; if any man ſerve me, ſaith Chriſt, him shall my father honour he that waiteth

on

on this maſter shall be honoured, *Joh.* 12. 26. *He that hath my commandments, my word, and goſpell, and keepeth them*, ſaith our ſaviour, *he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my father: and I will love him, and will manifeſt my ſelfe unto him*, as I will not doe to the World, and thoſe that trade for that onely; and my father and I will come unto him; and not onely give him a short viſit, *but we will make our abode with him.* What an honour is this to have the favour of and fellowship with the father, and with his ſon Jeſus Chriſt? and this honour have all his ſaints, who are exerciſing themſelves in this heavenly merchandiſe, *Joh.* 14. 21--23. and thoſe that are led by Wiſdome honour them that feare the Lord *Pſ.* 15. 4. and are inſtructed to hold them in reputation, and very highly to eſteeme them in Love, for their works ſake, who are ſanctifide and made meet for their maſters uſe, and prepared to every good worke, *Phil.* 2. 29. 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 11, 12, 13.

2. This heavenly exerciſe is better then the Merchandiſe of ſilver, becauſe it is more pleaſing to God: men may laudably ſerve God in any work of his providence he gives them to be exerciſed in; and may, while they are ſo exerciſed, with the bleſſing of God become rich; though when that is the higheſt end aimed at, it is diſpleaſing, and abominable to God, *Prov.* 23. 4. *Luk.* 16. 15. but ſtill to cry after Wiſdome, and lift up the voice for underſtanding, this exerciſe is better in the eyes of God then to ſeek ſilver, or the riches of this World. So much is ſignified to us in what is ſaid of Solomon who wrote this booke of the Proverbs. When the Lord in viſion had bidden him to aske what he should give him, Solomon deſired Wiſdome and knowledge; and a wiſe and underſtanding heart. And the ſpeech pleaſed the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing: And God ſaid unto him, be-

becauſe thou haſt asked this thing, and haſt not asked for thy ſelfe long life, neither haſt asked riches for thy ſelfe nor the life of thine enemies; but haſt asked for thy ſelfe underſtanding, behold I have done according to thy Word, 1 *King.* 3. 5, 12. 2 *Chron.* 1. 7, 12. our ſaviour inſtructs us firſt to ſeek the kingdome of God; and rather to ſeek that then any of the things of the world: and the kingdome of God is not meat and drinke, but righte ouſneſs, and peace, and ioy in the holy Ghoſt. For he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, is wel pleaſing to God, aud approved of men, *Matth.* 6. 33. *Luk.* 12. 30, 31. with *Rom.* 14. 17, 18. God hath no pleaſure in fooles, that are deſtitute of, and lightly eſteeme this excellent Wiſdome, *Eccleſ.* 5. 4. but there is ioy in heaven: and it even reioyceth the heart of our heavenly father when we retaine his words, and there thorow get Wiſdome, and underſtanding: it maketh his heart, as it were, glad, *Prov.* 10. 1. and 27. 11. *Whoſo loveth Wiſdome reioyceth his father,* *Prov.* 29. 3. hence that; *my ſon, if thine heart be wiſe, my heart ſhall reioyce, even mine; yea my reynes ſhall rejoyee, when thy lips ſpeak right things,* *Prov.* 23. 15, 16.

3. This ſpirituall merchandiſe is better then the merchandiſe of ſilver, becauſe it is more pleaſurable delight full, and joyous to us, while wee ſek this Wiſdome with the whole heart. The Ho: Ghoſt doth hereby evidence and demonſtrate that the Merchandiſe of Wiſdome and underſtanding is better then the Merchandiſe of ſilver, becauſe *her wayes are wayes of pleaſantneſs; and all her pathes are peace,* *Prov.* 3. 14, 17. *My ſon* ſaith Wiſdome, *eat thou honey becauſe it is good and the honey-comb which is ſweet to thy taſte. So ſhall the knowledge of Wiſdome be umto thy ſoule when thou haſt found it; then there ſhall be a reward, &c.* *Prov.* 24. 13, 14. The words of Wiſdome are pleaſant Words, even as an honey-comb, ſweet to the ſoule and health to the bones:

bones: yea they are admirably ſweet, ſweeter then honey, and the honey-comb, *Prov.*16.24. *Pſal.* 19,10. and 119. 103. *Prov.* 2. 10. Whatever pleaſure and delight men finde in the earthly merchandiſe yet it falls short of that they partake of who trade for Wiſdome; there is no fullneſs of ioy in the former; nor is it ſweet and delightfull to the moſt noble part of man, the ſoule; that may be ſad and ſorrowfull enough in the midſt of all their outward ioy, and delight: for the World, about which they are exerciſed, and all the things there of, are broken Ciſternes that can hold no water. But the God of hope fills the ſoule with ioy and peace in beleiving; and with ſuch ioy as a ſtranger intermedleth not with. *Prov.* 14. 10. *Rom.* 15. 13. 1 *Petr.* 1. 8. while the heart is exerciſed in a beleiving mind fullneſs, and conſideration of the precious blood of Chriſt; and of what there by he hath effected and obtained in to himſelſe, and is become; and of the grace of God as herein commended; and of all the treaſures of Wiſdome and knowledge which are hid inthis myſtery; it cauſeth them to rejoyce al wayes in the Lord, and to ioy in the God of their ſalvation, and though they are as ſorrowfull, yet alwayes rejoicing, *Habak.* 3. 15, 18. *Phil.* 3. 1, 3. and 4. 4. 2 *Corint.* 6. 10. this is life to the ſoule, and health to all the flesh, and the more they are thus exerciſed, the more they increaſe in underſtanding, and thereby they increaſe joy in the Lord, who is the onely true object of joy. *Iſay* 29, 19. *For God giveth to a man that is good before him, Wiſdome, and knowledge, and joy but to the ſinner* (that wanders out of, or erres from the way of underſtanding) *travell, to gather, and to heape up, that he may give to him that is good before God, Eccleſ.* 2. 26.

4. The merchandiſe of Wiſdome, and underſtanding is better then the merchandiſe of ſilver, becauſe it is a more ſure and certaine way of finding, none shall faile

faile of it who ſeek it as men ſeek ſilver, and ſearch for it as for hid treaſure: men may ſeek for the treaſures and riches of this World, and not finde them; they are uncertaine riches; there is an uncertainty in getting, aſwell as in keeping. 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. though many times the diligent hand maketh rich, and they meet with profit and increaſe who are induſtrious, and diligent in their buſineſs, and however if they be skilfull, therein also; yet this is not allwayes ſo. *I returned*, ſaith the preacher, *and ſaw under the ſun, that the race is not to the swift; nor the battell to the ſtrong; neither yet bread to the Wiſe; nor yet rithes to men of underſtanding; nor yet favour to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all*, *Eccleſ.* 9. 11. men may in vaine, and to no profit, riſe up early; and ſit up late, and eat the bread of carefullneſs, P*ſal.* 127. 2. there is a great uncertainty in getting and retaining this unrighteous Mammon, especially by merchandiſe, the merchants ships may be broken in going for commodities; or ſinke, and be caſt away when they are full and returning, 2 *Chron.* 20. 36, 37. Or trading may faile and decay: Or thoſe to whom they ſell and adventure their commodities may breake, or cheat and deceive them: or moth and ruſt may corrupt, and theeves break thorow and ſteale: and however God hath not ingaged his word that thoſe that ſeek ſilver and gold Shall certainely finde what they aime at, and ſeek after. But in ſeeking Wiſdome with the whole heart we shall be ſure to finde it; for God who cannot lye hath ſo promiſed, as hath been ſaid; and theſe promiſes are, confirmed with the precious blood of Jeſus, who in the vertue thereof is raiſed againe, and is the Mediator of the New Teſtament that the called may receive the promiſe of the eternall inheritance, *Hebr.* 9. 15. 2 *Corint.* 1. 20. *Matth.* 26. 28. hence our ſavior exhorteth, *aske and it shall be given you; ſeeke and ye shall finde*,

finde, knock and it shall be opened to you for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh is shall be opened. If earthly fathers, who are evill, give good gifts to their children; how much more shall your heavenly father give the holy Spirit, the Spirit of Wisdome and revelation, to them that aske him, Luk. 11. 9-13. *Ephes.* 1. 17. *Prov.* 2. 1-6. *Jam.* 1. 5, 6. the Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soule that seeketh him; even herein he is good; he will give himselfe unto them to be their Wisdome and inheritance, and with himselfe all things that pertaine to life and godlines according to that; *ye shall call upon me and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you; and ye shall seek me, and finde me when jou search for me with all your heart; and I will be found of you* saith the Lord, *Lament.* 3 25. with *Jer.* 29. 12-14. and in dispersing this heavenly Wisdome it shall certainly tend to the inriching of them: according to that *be stedfast, unmovable, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as your labour shall not be in vaine in the Lord: in due time we shall reap if we faint not.* 1 *Cor.* 15. 58. *Galat.* 6. 9, 10. What an incouragement is this for us to seeke Wisdome, to get up, and be doing, when there is a certainty of finding? and what a shame will it be for us to neglect the opportunities put into our hands? are the merchants of the earth so diligent in seeking perishing substance, when also there is so great an uncertainty of finding? and shall we be so bruitich and foolish as to have no heart to seek durable riches and righteousnes, when there is a certainty of finding in seeking in the due opportunity? those that seek Wisdome early shall finde her. *Prov.* 8. 17. O! let us not be slothfull, but diligent followers of them who thorow faith and patience inherit the promises.

5, The merchandise of Wisdome and understanding is the most excellent merchandise, becaus it is

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moſt ſafe, and ſecure from dangers and feares: thoſe that occupy themſelves in the earthly merchandiſe are expoſed to manifold feares, leſt they ſhould loſe their commodities: yea and if they adventure upon the ſeas, they are in danger of loſing their lives: For many times God commandeth, and raiſeth up the ſtormy winde, which lifteth up the waves thereof; they mount up to heaven, they goe downe againe to the dephts, their ſoule is melted becauſe of trouble; they reele to and fro, and ſtagger like a drunken man, and all their Wiſdome is ſwallowed up, *Pſal.* 107. 25-27. yea and many times they loſe their lives alſo by ſtormes, or robbers, &c. And if they grow rich they are in daily danger, and feare, leſt theeves ſhould break in upon them, and ſpoile thein, or kill them; and this feare hath torment and occaſions much diſquietment to them. But whoſo hearkneth to Wiſdome ſhall dwell ſafely; and ſhall be quiet from the feare of evill. *Prov.* 1. 20-33. This is a motive laid downe by Wiſdome to ingage us to trade in this excellent commodity, to keep ſound wiſdome and diſcretion. Then ſhalt thou walk in thy way ſafely, and thy foot ſhall not ſtumble: When thou lieſt downe thou ſhalt not be afraid; Yea thou ſhalt lye downe, and thy ſleep ſhall be ſweet. Be not afraid of ſudden feare, *for the Lord ſhall be thy confidence, and ſhall keepe thy foot from being taken*, *Prov.* 3. 21-26. Indeed the wiſe merchants as men, and ſons of Adam, are ſubject to like paſſions and infirmities as others, and ſo to feare and be afraid of danger: but this wiſdome *ſtrengthneth the wiſe againſt the feare of evill, more then ten mighty men which are in the city. A wiſe man is ſtrong, yea a man of knowledge increaſeth ſtrength*, *Eccleſ.* 7. 19. *and* 9. 16-18. *Prov.* 24. 5. the love of God knowne, and heartly beleeved caſteth out continually that feare which hath torment, and makes men

bold as a lion, 1 *Joh.* 4. 18. *Prov.* 28. 1. theſe wiſe merchants know, that that good part and portion they trade in, and make choice of, ſhall never be taken away, *Luk.* 10. 42. and that he that ſeeth the ſon and beleiveth in him ſhall never perish, but have everlaſting life. God preſerveth their ſoules, and none can pluck them out of his hand, who is greater then all; and though in this Merchandiſe, and for Chriſt ſake they hate, and may loſe their lives in this World, they ſhall keep them unto life eternall. He that beleiveth in Chriſt, though he were dead yet ſhall he live, *and he that liveth and beleiveth ſhall never dye*, Joh. 12. 25, 26. and 11. 25, 26. the name of the Lord is aſtrong tower, and they run thereinto and are ſafe, and ſet on high from evill, and from the feare of evill: So that they can glorify God in the fires, and not feare any evill though they walk in the valley of the ſhadow of death. Wiſdome loves thoſe that love her: and the beloved of the Lord ſhall dwell in ſafety, the Lord ſhall cover them all the day long. *Prov.* 8. 17. with *Deuter.* 33. 12.

6. The trading for heavenly Wiſdome is the beſt Merchandiſe, becauſe it is the moſt eaſy way, eaſier then the Merchandiſe of ſilver and gold, this is the Motive and argumens Chriſt, the Wiſdome of God uſeth, to prevaile with us to come unto him, and learne of him, that his yoke is eaſy, and his burden light. *Matth.* 11. 28-30. It may not ſo appeare to our Wiſdome, but may ſeeme very difficult; Yea it is a great myſtery in it ſelfe; but it is made eaſy, and is declared ſo to be by him who is truth it ſelfe; and if our right eye cauſe us to offend, let us pluck it out, and become fooles, that we may beleive him. Amongſt men every one cannot be a Merchant of the earth: Some whatever Maſters and inſtructers they have, yet they want capacity to learne this myſtery of Merchandiſe; and others, becauſe

cauſe of the difficulty of the imployment, though they may doe well while they are before the Maſters eye, and under his care, and inſtruction, yet when they trade for them ſelves they may be to ſeek, and thorow their unskilfullneſs be un fit for it, becauſe there are ſo many intricacies in it thorow the riſing and falling of commodities, and by reaſon of deceitfull men they may meet with, &c. And others though they have capacity enough, yet may be ſo poore as that they cannoth carry an end their trade; or ſuch heavy cuſtomes and impoſitions may be laid upon their goods, that they know not how to pay them and ſubſiſt. But any man may thorow the grace of Chriſt be a wiſe Merchant, to trade for, and in heavenly Wiſdome, as before is shewne. There is a wiſe and gracious Maſter to teach them, even Chriſt Jeſus the Wiſdome of God; and he calleth, o ye ſimple underſtand Wiſdome, and ye fooles be ye of an underſtanding heart: Heare, for I will ſpeak of excellent things; Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach ſinners in the way. And though they have no capacity naturally, but are all fooles, yet the Spirit is put upon him, and he will bring forth, and give judgement, capacity, and diſcretion to them that have none; which no eartly Merchant can doe to his apprentice. God hath given him for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, and unſtop the deafe eares. *Pſal.* 25. 8. *Iſay.* 42. 1-7. He is even eyes in his teſtimony to the blind; and though they are dull of hearing and learning, though they are unteachable, and untractable, yet he is meek and lowly in heart, and will not ſtrive, nor cry, nor cauſe his voice to be heard in the ſtreets: A bruiſed reed will he not break, and the dimly burning week will he not quench *Matth.* 11. 29. *Iſay.* 42. 2, 3. Hence he calleth heare ye deafe, and look ye blind that you may ſee, and not be diſcouraged becauſe of your naturall incapacity.

pacity. Who is blind as my ſervant? Or deafe as my meſſenger that I ſent? Who is blind (thorow charity) as he that is perfect? And blind as the Lords ſervant? Seeing many things (that might provoke him to caſt us off, and forbeare to inſtruct us) but he obſerveth them not, opening the eares, but he heareth not. *Iſay.* 42. 18-20. with verſ. 1. And then he that cometh to him, he will never caſt out from under his care and inſtruction, but will ſtill guide them with his counſell and eye, untill he receive them to glory: The time of their apprenticeship to him is all their life time, they are ſtill the Lords ſervants, though free from all men. And the way of Wiſdome is made eaſy, and plaine, as declared in the teſtimony of Jeſus; the rules, orders, and ſtatutes not changeable, as Merchants here may be, but abide the ſame at all times: The way of the righteous is made plaine, and raiſed up as a cauſey, ſo as way faring men, though fooles shall not erre therein. *Prov.* 15. 19. *Iſay.* 35. 8. Nor is this heavenly commodity ſo deare as that they may not get, and obtaine it, but they may have it without money, and without price, even freely. *Iſay.* 55. 1. And though it muſt be bought, yet every man hath that to buy it withall; and in parting with all he hath, shall be made a partaker of it. *Luk.* 14. 33. Nor will he lay ſuch burdens, and impoſitions upon any as to diſcourage them; his commandments are not greivons, 1 *Joh.* 5. 3. this Merchandiſe is made eaſy by their gracious and wiſe Lord, who is the head, Maſter, and orderer of the ſeekers; and who is alſo the commodity to be ſought after, and injoyed by them. Though there are excellent things containd in Wiſdome, yet they are all plaine to him that underſtandeth, and right to them that finde knowledge, thorow Wiſdomes inſtruction. *Prov.* 8. 4-10. Hence when our heyenly Father calls upon us, and provokes

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us to get Wiſdome, to get underſtanding, &c. that we might not ſay, this trade is ſo hard I cannot attaine it, he ſignifieth, that he makes, it eaſy by his words; and therefore ſaith, inſtead of murmuring and queſtioning; heare, o my ſon, and receive my ſayings: I have taught theé in the way of Wiſdome, I have ledd thee in the right pathes (in the way of Wiſdome are right pathes, there are no turnings in it either to the right hand, or to the left; no thornes, ſnares, or ſtumbling blocks in it) when thou goeſt (therein) thy ſteps ſhall not be ſtraitned (there is roome enough) and when thou runneſt thou ſhalt not ſtumble, &c. *Prov.* 4. 5-11. 27. with *Jerem.* 31. 9. and they that walk herein ſhall finde it an eaſy way; their ſoule ſhall dwell at eaſe, whatever troubles they have in the outward man, *Pſal.* 25. 13. Whereas thoſe that exerciſe themſelves in the earthly merchandiſe meet with, not onely much wearineſs to the flesh, but alſo much vexation of ſpirit, *Eccleſ.* 2. 17, 18, 22, 23, 26. a ſcorner that hates inſtruction and reproofe ſeekes Wiſdome, and findes it not, but knowledge is eaſy to him that underſtands; *Prov.* 14. 6. with chap 15. 12. and 9. 7, 8.

7. This ſpirituall merchandiſe is better then that of ſilver, becauſe it is more cleane and free from pollution: there is much pollution and corruption cleaving to the earthly merchandiſe thorow our luſt to the riches of this World, 2 *Peter.* 1. 4. the thing they trade in and for is called unrighteous Mammon, becauſe too often unrighteouſneſs is uſed and exerciſed in trading for it, *Luk.* 16. 11. and the merchants of the earth doe very frequently pollute and defile themſelves in their trade and traffique; according to that; *He is a merchant, the ballances of deceit are in his hand, he loveth to oppreſs, and deceive. And Ephraim ſaid, yet I am become rich, I have found me out ſubſtance; in all my labours they ſhall finde no iniquity in me, &c. Hoſe.* 12. 7, 8.

there is many times much evill and fraud found with them in buying, much falſe ſpeaking, lying, and deceit: *the getting of treaſures by a lying tongue is a vanity toſſed to and fro, from one to another, of them that ſeek death*, *Prov.* 21. 6. When they are buying then they diſcommend, diſparage, and diſpraiſe the wares they are about, that they may beat downe the price of them, and have them at a cheap rate. *It is naught, it is naught, ſaith the buyer; but when he is gone his way then he boaſteth:* praiſeth the commodities which before he undervalued, and boaſteth what a good bargaine he hath gotten, *Prov.* 20. 14. and thus, and other wayes they goe beyond, overreach, and defraud others, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 6. and many times in their Merchandiſing, they, to the end they may have a commodity worth the buying, have fellowship with others in their unfruitfull workes of darkneſs, keeping company with fwearers, drunkards, and profane ones, and too much loving their manners, according to what is ſaid of Tyrus. By the multitude of thy merchandiſe they have filled the midſt of thee with violence, and thou haſt ſinned, *thou haſt defiled thy ſanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffique*, *Ezek.* 28. 15-18. And in ſelling, many times, there is much pollution found with men, boaſting of, and overvaluing their wares, as ſuppoſing gaine to be godlineſs, and that all is honeſtly come by that is that way gotten, which is a great evill, and too commonly found with men in their trading, 1 *Tim.* 6. 5. *Amos* 8. 5. Or if men be free from thoſe groſs evills in their buying and ſelling, yet many times their hearts goe after their covetouſneſs, and they love the world, and the things thereof, and, if riches increaſe ſet their hearts upon them; and are highminded, or truſt in thoſe uncertaine riches, which things are an abomination in the ſight of God,

1 *Joh.*

1 *Joh.* 2. 15, 16. 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. *Epheſ.* 5. 5. *Pſal.* 62. 10. But the trading for and in this heavenly merchandiſe, is free from ſuch pollutions: This wiſdome that is from above, Chriſt as declared in the goſpell, is firſt pure, *Jam.* 3. 17. and the feare of the Lord, which is the beginning of Wiſdome unto man, and the inſtruction of Wiſdome, this is cleane, *Pſal.* 19. 9. with *Prov.* 1. 7. and 15. 33. the feare of the Lord is to hate evill, pride, and arrogancy, and the evill way, and froward mouth, *Prov.* 8. 14. they are, fooles that count it a ſport to doe miſchiefe, and make a mock at ſin, but a man of underſtanding hath wiſdome, which will preſerve him from ſuch folly, and from all evill, *Prov.* 10. 23. and 14. 8, 9. Wiſdome and the way of getting Wiſdome, is cleane; and in walking therein we ſhall be kept from every path of the deſtroyer, in all our converſation: we may, and ſhall eſcape the pollutions of the world thorow the knowledge of our Lord and ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt, 2 *Peter.* 2. 20. this Wiſdome is an excellent preſervative, to preſerve us from the evill of the world, that we may not have fellowship with men in their unfruitfull workes of darkneſs, but rather reprove them; to keep us from deceiving, and defrauding others in our buying and ſelling, and in all our exerciſe about the affaires of this life; to preſerve us from covetouſneſs, pride, deſires of vain-glory, and from every evill way: it is pure and purifying; and an excellent Antidote to keep us from all the infection of ſin: to deliver us from the way of the evill man, from the man that ſpeaketh froward things (and not the words of wiſdome, in which there is nothing froward, *Prov.* 8. 8.) who leave the pathes of uprightneſs (the way of wiſdome) to walk in the wayes of darkneſs: who reioyce to doe evill, and delight in the frowardneſs of the wicked; whoſe wayes are crooked, and they froward in

their pathes: And to de liver us from the ſtrange Woman, even from the woman which flattereth with her lips on this account, becauſe this treaſure of heavenly wiſdome is ſo pure and cleane, and will preſerve us from evill, the Ho: Ghoſt inſtructs us to ſeek it. Get Wiſdome, get underſtanding, forget it not, neither decline from the words of my mouth, forſake her not, and she shall preſerve thee, love her and she shal keep thee, *Prov.* 4. 5-7. *and* 2. 10-19. *and* 5. 1-4. *and* 7. 4, 5. *and* 9. 5, 6. *Epheſ.* 5. 11-17. *Coloſ.* 4. 5, 6.

8. The merchandiſe of Wiſdome is more excellent then that of ſilver, becauſe it is more profitable and beneficiall; but this leads us to the next thing to be conſidered by us. What hath been ſaid unto this inſtruction, to wit. That the Merchandiſe of Wiſdome and underſtanding is better then the Merchandiſe of Silver, both becauſe Wiſdome, which is the thing to be ſought after is more excellent, yea infinitely, and incomparably better then ſilver and gold; and the refore alſo the way of ſeeking and getting it is, anſwerably better, more honourable, pleaſing to God pleaſant to the wiſe Merchant; certaine ſafe eaſy cleane, and profitable; may be of uſefullneſs to us.

1. To ſhew onto us the ignorance and folly of the moſt part of men, who in their eſteemes, and practices preferre the things that are in the World, before this heavenly, rich, and moſt inriching commodity: ſuch are fooles in the account of Wiſdome, though they are lookt upon as, and accounted wiſe men in the World: They are fooles that deſpiſe Wiſdome and inſtruction. *Prov.* 1. 2, 7. fooles they are that hate knowledge, as all doe who love, and ſerve the World; for no Man can ſerve two Maſters: either he will lov e the one and hate the other; or cleave to the one and forſake the other: Ye (ſaith Chriſt) cannot ſerve God and Mammon. *Prov.* 1. 22. with *Matth.* 6. 24. He that

that hath the World for his Maſter; that ſerveth, and is ruled by, and obeyeth it, cannot ſerve Chriſt as his Lord, for theſe two are contrary the one to the other: No man can love the World and the Father; if any man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 *Joh.* 2. 15. It is no mans evill to ſerve God in any work of his providence he gives us to be exerciſed in; nay it is an evill which the Ho: Ghoſt doth reprove, and condemne, to be idle, and ſlothfull in buſineſs: But this is mens folly, that they make the World, and the things thereof the *Maine* thing to be ſought after, and gotten by them; that they can watch, and look every one for his gaine from his quarter; that they can riſe early, and ſit up late, and run, and labour for, and lay hold on every opportunity, and indure hardneſs, and not matter ſhame, or danger, ſo they may but get and increaſe their earthly ſubſtance: and meane time when a price is put into their hands for getting Wiſdome, they have no heart thereto; they can neglect opportunities for getting this ſpirituall commodity, and then cry, there is a lion in the way, I ſhall be ſlain in the ſtreets: they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth, *Jerem.* 9. 3. but are fearfull, and afraid of ſufferings, ſhame, and reproach for Chriſts ſake; aſhamed of him and his words in an evill and adulterous generation: What will become of ſuch in the end? Chriſt will be aſhamed of ſuch, when he cometh in his owne glory, and in the glory of his father, and in the glory of his holy Angells, *Luk.* 9. 23-16. with *Mark.* 8. 34-38. this is that which is greatly provoking to God, he was wroth with thoſe who, when they were invited to come into Wiſdoms houſe, and eat of her proviſion, made light of the invitation, and went, one to his farme, another to his merchandiſe; Yea proteſts that none of them ſhall taſte of his ſupper, *Matth.* 22. 4-7. with *Luk.* 14. 16-24.

oh that we may ſo conſider it, *that we may walke circumſpectly, not as fooles, but as wiſe, redeeming the time*, (for-getting Wiſdome) *becauſe the dayes are evill*, *Epheſ.* 5. 15- 17.

2. And let us all be exhorted, ſeeing Wiſdome is the principall thing to get it; and with all our gettings to get underſtanding. And to move hereto conſider further.

2. The gaine of Wiſdome and underſtanding is better then that of fine gold, of the choiceſt, and moſt refined gold; and ſo better then the gaine of all earthly riches; though the gaine of gold if it be honeſtly gotten, and to a good end laboured for, that we may honour the Lord with our ſubſtance, and with the firſt fruits of our increaſe, and live to him that died for us, and roſe againe, is good; Yet the gaine of ſpirituall Wiſdome is better, and more to be deſired then gold, yea then much fine gold; and better then all the gainfull things here below; and ſo have wiſe men accounted it. *Philip.* 3. 7, 8, 9. It is admirably, and inexpreſſibly better. *Prov.* 16. 16. it is profitable unto all things, having the promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, as is ſaid of godlineſs: And indeed this Wiſdome, and Godlineſs are the ſame: The root and foundation of Godlineſs is, God was manifeſt in the flesh, juſtified in the Spirit; the meanes and medium for making it knowne, and manifeſting it, and giving, and diſpenſing it, is, the goſpell, eſpecially as preached by the Apoſties: The exerciſing our ſelves to godlineſs is, beleiving with the heart on Chriſt as delivered to death for our offences, and raiſed againe for our juſtification, and glorified, as this ts declared to us in the goſpell. 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. with Chapt. 3. 16.

1. The gaine of it is better now, by it there is profit to them that ſee the ſun. *Eccleſ.* 7. 11. For

1. It gives all things that pertaine to life; and gives life

life to them that get it, even ſpirituall, and eternal life, now by faith, and a firſt fruits of the Spirit, and all contained therein, which ſilver and gold cannot doe: Wiſdome is a defence, & money is a defence, but the excellency of knowledge is, that Wiſdome giveth life to them that have it. *Eccleſ.* 7. 12. hereby the Holy Ghoſt doth evidence that the gaine of Wiſdome is better then fine gold; and therefore propoſeth it as a motive to move and prevaile with us to ſeek and get it; She is a tree of life to all that lay hold on her. *Prov.* 3. 17. And this is contained in the bleſſedneſs they meet with, and partake of, that ſeek and finde her; *Whoſo findeth her findeth life.* *Prov.* 8. 32. 35. As

1. It giveth unto thoſe that finde Wiſdome, the forgiveneſs of ſins; by Chriſt *all that beleive, are juſtified from all things from which they could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes.* *Act.* 13. 39. And this forgiveneſs of ſins is included in eternall life; and therefore eternall life is oppoſed to condemnation; and in having that a man paſſeth from death to life. *Joh.* 5. 25. and being juſtified from their ſins by the blood of Chriſt, much more ſhall they be ſaved from wrath, even from the wrath of God, thorow him. *Rom.* 5. 9. Hereinits gaine is greatly preferred before fine gold, and all the riches of this World; riches profit not in a day of wrath, but righteouſneſs delivereth from death *Prov.* 10. 2. and 11. 4. Neither mens ſilver, nor their gold ſhall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lords wrath. *Zephan.* 1. 18. their riches will not procure them a pardon from God (though they may from the Man of ſin) nor deliver them from his anger, and the dreadfull, and direfull effects thereof; their money will not obtain the remiſſion of thair ſins when they come to dye; nor give them peace with God; nor will this deliver in the day of wrath: But men ſhall then caſt their

their idolls of ſilver and gold to which they have given their loves and worship, to the moles, and to the bats, to goe into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for feare of the Lord; they ſhall then caſt their ſilver into the ſtreets, and their gold ſhall be removed, or, ſhall be as uncleaneſs; their ſilver, and their gold ſhall not be able to deliver them in the day of the Lords wrath. *Iſay.* 2. 19-21. *Ezeck.* 7. 19. But this is the gain of Wiſdome: In finding and winning Chriſt, a man alſo receives remiſſion of ſins, and deliverance from Gods wrath, and the feares thereof; So as being juſtified by faith, he hath peace with God thorow our Lord Jeſus. *Rom.* 4. 25, and 5. 1. To him give all the Prophets witneſs, that thorow his name whoſoever beleiveth in him ſhall receive the remiſſion of ſins. *Act.* 10. 43. 1 *Joh.* 5. 11, 12. And oh what a bleſſed priviledge is this! It is even the ſumme of all bleſſedneſs: Even as David deſcribeth the bleſſedneſs of the man to whom the Lord imputes righteouſneſs without works, ſaying, *bleſſed in the Man whoſe iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe ſin is covered, Pſal.* 32. 1, 2. with *Rom.* 4. 5-7. And it is alſo the inlett unto all Salvation; He giveth the knowledge and injoyment of ſalvation thorow the forgiveneſs of ſins *Luk.* 1. 77. *Pſal.* 103. 1-3. Herethorow they receive ſalvation, and deliverance from his anger, the power whereof who knoweth! *Pſal.* 90. 11, 12. *The wrath of this King of Kings is as meſſengers of death, but a wiſe man will pacify it.* How? not by fine gold; but to this end, *how much better is it to get Wiſdome then gold? Prov.* 16. 14-16.

2. It gives to men the Spirit of life, even, that living, quickning Spirit which is Wiſdoms Spirit; this money wil not get, or give: It was an heinous, provoking iniquity in Simon Magus, to offer money for the Holy

Holy Spirit: and therefore Peter ſaid unto him, *Thy money perish with thee, becauſe thou haſt thought the gift of God may be purchaſed with mony, &c. Act.* 8. 18-21, 22, 23. But now this is the promiſe that Wiſdome hath promiſed the ſimple ones, who love their ſimplicity, and ſcorners that delight in ſcorning, and fooles that hate knowledge, that in turning at her reproofs, she will poure out her Spirit unto them; and ſaith, *Behold*, conſider, and mark this, for this is a wonderfull inriching gift of God. *Prov.* 1. 20-23. This Spirit is given by Wiſdome; it is upon, and reſteth upon Chriſt Jeſus, even the ſpirit of wiſdome and underſtanding; and it is given as a ſpirit of Wiſdome, and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt, *Iſay.* 11. 2, 3. with *Epheſ.* 1. 17, 18. and by this ſpirit, wiſdome doth make knowne her words, *Prov.* 1. 23. and therethorow glorify herſelfe; for it is the work of his ſpirit to beare witneſs of Chriſt, to glorify him, and take of his things, and ſhew unto us, that we might run unto him; and that our hearts might be enamoured on him, and united unto him, and reioyce in him, *Joh.* 15. 26. and 16. 14. and thorow his glorifying Chriſt, and ſhewing unto men the excellency, and precioufneſs of the flesh and blood of Chriſt Jeſus, this holy ſpirit doth quicken them to a lively hope by the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead, who by the grace of God taſted death for every man: it is the ſpirit that quickneth, 1 *Petr.* 1. 3. with *Joh.* 6. 35-63. and this hope in Chriſt makes not ashamed, becauſe the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy ſpirit: *for while we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungoodly*, *Rom.* 5. 5, 6. But thereby we are ſaved from being weary, and fainting in our mindes by reaſon of any afflictions, or adverſity we meet withall; and from our ſins and idolls, *Rom.* 8. 24,

8. 24, 25. 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. and this hope is an anckor of the ſoule, both ſure, that which will not break: and ſtedfaſt, ſtanding faſt in Chriſt the rock, and therefore will not ſlip, or deceive us; and which entreth into that within the vail, whither the fore-runner is for us entred, Jeſus, made an highprieſt after the order of Melchiſedec, *Hebr.* 6. 18-20. this ſpirit of Wiſdome is an excellent gift of God; it is the ſpirit of truth, to guide into all truth; it is the comforter, to comfort us in all our tribulations: it is the ſpirit of life, to inliven, and quicken us: it is the ſpirit of Wiſdome, to open our blind eyes, and ſtill, and continually to give Wiſdome to the wiſe: It is the ſpirit of adoption, and freedome, whereby we cry Abba Father; it is the ſpirit of the feare of the Lord, to teach, and help us to reverence, and ſtand in awe of God, and to depart from iniquity: It is the ſpirit, where by we may abound in hope of the mercy of Chriſt, and God in him, unto eternall life; and therefore it is ſet downe as that in which all good things are contained compare. *Matt.* 7. 11. with *Luk.* 11. 13. And it is ſo excellent in its gifts, influences, and operations, in bearing witneſs of the blood of Chriſt, and what he is become therethorow; and of the water or free love of God commended everlaſtingly therein. 1 *Joh.* 5. 6. Well may it be ſaid, the gain of Wiſdome is better then fine gold.

3. It gives unto us the favour of God in which is life. *Pſal.* 30. 5. Yea whoſe loving kindneſs is better then life. *Pſal.* 63. 3. They are loved with peculiar manner of love that love Wiſdome. *Prov.* 8. 17. Chriſts Father will love them, and Chriſt will love them, and will manifeſt himſelfe unto them. *Joh.* 14. 21. 23. *Prov.* 3. 1-4. This is a motive ſet downe by Wiſdome to ingage us to ſeeke her; and an evidence of

of the bleſſednes of him that findes her. Whoſo findeth her. — Shall obtain favour of the Lord. *Prov.* 8. 32-35. *The Kings favour is toward a wiſe ſervant, but his wrath is upon him that cauſeth ſhame*, that deſpiſeth Wiſdome and is a foole. *Prov.* 14. 35. The favour of God is a wonderfully gainfull, profitable, and deſirable thing; and therefore the ſervants of God have prayed that they might be favoured with the favour he beares unto his people, becauſe of the bleſſed advantage thereof. *Pſalm.* 106. 4, 5. And have intreated that with their whole heart. *Pſal.* 119. 58. this is infinitely better, and more to be deſired then the favour of great men, and princes, for that is deceitfull; and it is better, and rather to be choſen then ſilver and gold. *Prov.* 22. 1. In the light of the Kings countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter raine, to refresh, and revive, and fructify the ſoule, and to make it like a watered garden: But how may we be made partakers of it? Money will not procure, or give it: If a man would give all the ſubſtance of his houſe for love, it would utterly be contemned. *Cant.* 8. 7. But this *good underſtanding giveth favour. Prov.* 13. 15, and it may be had in getting Wiſdome, and hereby the Holy Ghoſt evidenceth intimately that the gaine of Wiſdome is better then fine gold, when he ſaith; *How much better is it to get Wiſdome then gold! and to get underſtanding rather to be choſen then ſilver. Prov.* 16, 15, 16. O! bleſſed are the people that know the joyfull ſound, *They ſhall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance: In thy name ſhall they rejoyce all the day, and in thy righteouſneſs ſhall they be exalted: For thou art the glory of their ſtrength; and in thy favour our horne ſhall be exalted.* *Pſal.* 89. 15-17. Many there are that intreat the favour of the prince, and every mau is a friend to him that giveth gifts; But he that getteth Wiſdome loveth

his

his owne ſoule, he that keepeth underſtanding shal finde good; he shall finde the favour of, and fellowſhip with God, which is as farre above the favour and friendship of the kings and princes of the earth, as himſelfe is above them, unto whom none of the princes, or kings of the earth may be likened, or compared; and before whom all nations are as nothing, and they are counted to him leſs then nothing, and vanity, *Prov.* 19. 6, 8. and 3. 3, 4. *Iſay.* 40 15, 18.

2. The gaine of Wiſdome is better then fine gold, becauſe as it gives all things that pertain to life; ſo alſo it gives all things that pertain to godlineſs, 2 *Petr.* 1. 3. it is profitable to direct us thereto, that we may worship God in the ſpirit, and rejoyce in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the flesh, *Eccleſ.* 10.10. and that we may be imitators, and followets of God as deare children. *The feare of the Lord is the inſtruction of Wiſdome*, that which Wiſdome inſtructs us to, *Prov.* 15. 33. it teacheth us to reverence him, to give to him the honour due unto his name; to truſt in him, *Prov.* 22. 17, 20. to depart from evill, *Job* 28. 28. to pray unto him, *Eccleſ.* 5. 1. to ſpeak profitably unto men: *Prov.* 15. 2. to ſeek and increaſe knowledge, *Prov.* 18. 15. and 21. 11. to rebuke others when need requireth, *Prov.* 25 12. *Eccleſ.* 7. 5. to know when to ſpeak, and when to be ſilent, *Prov.* 17. 27, 28. yea it is profitable to direct, us in all our converſation, that we may give none offence in any thing to the Jew, or Gentile, or to the church of God, but that we may doe all things that God in all things may be glorified, and the good of men, and eſpeciall good of beleivers may be purſued, and promoted hence the Apoſtle prayes, and deſires for the beleivers, that they might be filled with the knowledge of Gods will in all Wiſdome, and ſpirituall underſtanding, that they might walk

walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruit full in every good work, and increaſing with the increaſe of God; and that they might be ſincere, and without offence til the day of Chriſt, *Philip.* 1. 9, 11. *Coloſ.* 1. 9, 11. and have inſtructed them to walk in Wiſdome toward them that are without; as intimating, that this would teach them how to walk, and pleaſe God, and ſo help them to order their converſation that he might be glorified in all things thorow Jeſus Chriſt, *Coloſ.* 4. 5, 6.

3. The gain of Wiſdome is better then fine gold, becauſe in ſeeking, and getting that we ſhall have all other things appertaining to the naturall life, which are good, and needfull for us: ſuch meat, drink, cloathes, health, deliverance from trouble, continuance of life, as he ſees good for us who is perfect in knowledge, and infinite in goodneſs, according to what our ſaviour ſaith; *take no thought ſaying, what ſhall we eat? or what ſhall we drink? or where withall ſhall we be cloathed?* (For after all theſe things doe the Gentiles ſeek) *for your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe things: But ſeek ye firſt the kingdome of God, and his righteouſneſs; and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you, Matth.* 6. 31, 33. there are many things that gold wil not give which appertaine to this preſent naturall life; it will not give a man health in ſickneſs; it will not make the life comfortable, but by occaſion thereof, many times it is more full of diſquietment, and vexation of ſpirit: it will not defend a man from danger; but they that have it, and have much of it are the more expoſed to danger: it will not deliver from the feare of evill, but rather it occaſioneth feare to a man: nor can a man there by adde one cubit to his age; a mans life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth,

Luk. 12. 15. But they that ſeeke this Wiſdome ſhall not want any good thing, *Pſal.* 34.8,10. and 84. 10,11. it is ſo acceptable to God that men ſeek this excellent, and heavenly, commodity that he will with hold no good thing from ſuch as are ſo exerciſed, 1 *Tim.* 6. 5,6,8. and 4. 4,8. it did ſo pleaſe the Lord that Solomon asked of him Wiſdome, and underſtanding, that he not onely gave that unto him, and a wiſe and underſtanding heart; but he alſo gave unto him that which he did not ask to wit, riches, and wealth, and honour, 1 *King.* 3. 5. 13. 2 *Chron.* 1. 7, 12. riches and honour are in Wiſdoms left hand to diſpenſe thereof as is good, to thoſe that ſeek her, and therefore she invites us to trade for her, *Prov* 3. 13. 16. and 8. 18. and God hath made proviſion in his great, and precious promiſes, and given us aſſurance, that with Chriſt he will alſo freely give us all things, *Rom.* 8. 32. and all things are theirs who are Chriſts, the world, life, death, things preſent, and things to come, 1 *Corinth.* 3. 21, 23. how might this provoke and incourage us to get Wiſdome and underſtanding, and aſſure us, that the gain of it is excellent; and ſo help us to have our converſation without covetouſneſs, and be content with ſuch things as we have, for he hath ſaid, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee*; ſo that we may boldly ſay, the Lord is my helper, and I will not feare what flesh can doe unto mee, *Hebr.* 13. 5, 6.

2. And the gaine of Wiſdome and underſtanding is better then that of fine gold hereafter, infinitely better a mans life, as before is ſaid conſiſts not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth, and much leſs eternall life: but they that ſeek and get Wiſdome shall inherit glory, and ſuch glory as eye hath not ſeen, nor eare heard, nor hath it entred into

into the heart of man to conceive; this is contained in the motives that the Wiſdome of God maketh uſe of, to provoke us to get Wiſdome, and with all our gettings to get underſtanding: she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crowne of glory shall she deliver to thee, *Prov.* 4. 5, 9. and that which shewes the excellency of its gain compleatly, is, that this ſalvation, glory, and happineſs shall be injoyed by ſuch for ever and ever. When the Ho: Ghoſt gives us a particular evidence of the excellency, and gainfullneſs of Wiſdome, he ſaith, length of dayes is in her right hand, as the moſt excellent thing, *Prov.* 3. 13. 16. even length of dayes for ever and ever *Pſal.* 21. 4. this compleats its preciouſneſs, and demonſtrates its gainfullneſs, and evidenceth the happineſs of thoſe that trade for it, and finde it; Whatever glory, and bleſſednes were ſet before us hereafter to prevaile with us, and ingage us to ſeek Wiſdome; if we might have in finding her deliverance from all evill, and the favour of God, and fellowship with him, and ſo the injoyment of all deſirable, and conceivable good, yea of all good propoſed to us, yet if there were an end to ſuch injoyment, it would not be ſo truly gainfull, nor ſo deſirably precious: but in the injoyment of her there will be fullneſs of joy, and pleaſures in her right hand for evermore. Herein indeed its gain appeares evidently to be better then fine gold; riches are not for ever, nor doth the crowne indure to all generations, *Prov.* 27. 24. but to them who by patient continuance in welldoing ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality, will the Lord give eternall life, and poſſeſs them of an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that paſſeth not away, reſerved in the heavens for them; for the things that are not ſeen are

eternall, 2 *Corinth.* 4. 16, 18. *Rom.* 2. 7. they shall be ſaved in the Lord with an everlaſting ſalvation, and ſhall not be aſhamed, nor confounded world with out end this, wiſely conſidered, imbitters the things, of this world, and weanes the heart from them, and crucifies them to the ſoule; the world paſſeth away, and the luſt thereof, both the object of it, as gold, and ſilver, &c. Which are corruptible; and the act alſo; but he that doth the will of God, in ſeeking Wiſdome, abideth for ever: there will be an injoyment of its gain to all eternity, and of the bleſſedneſs of thoſe that have and retaine her, there ſhall be no end: here is a commodity worthy our trading for, becauſe it is ſo infinitely, and eternally gainfull: that which other merchants trade for will come to an end; the merchandiſe of gold and ſilver, and precious ſtones, and of pearles, and fine linnen, and purple, and ſilk, and ſcarlet, and all ſweet wood, and all manner veſſells of ivory, and all manner veſſells of moſt precious wood, and of braſs, and iron, and marble, and cinamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincenſe, and wine, and oyle, and fine floure, and wheat, and beaſts, and sheep, and horſes, and chariots, &c. ſhall all depart away; and the merchants of theſe things ſhall weep, and waile becauſe theſe riches ſhall come to nought, *Revel* 18. 11, 23. But herein it will appeare that the Merchandiſe of Wiſdome is better then ſilver, and the gain thereof then fine gold; and that they are wiſe and happy merchants that trade for, and in this heavenly commodity, becauſe it hath the promiſe of the life to come; by this Wiſdome their dayes ſhall be multiplied to all eternity, and the yeares of their life ſhall be increaſed, *Prov.* 9. 10, 12 and 4. 9, 10.

Let all then be of uſefullneſs to us.

1. To

1. Te take us of from liſtening to Satan, the God of this world, whoſe work it is to glorify the things of this world, that we might love them, and ſet our hearts upon them, and for the ſake thereof neglect, and deſpiſe this Wiſdome and to take us of from admiring, and being bewitched with *Myſtery Babilon*, or her merchandiſe. *Revel.* 18. and to help us to ceaſe from our owne Wiſdome, *Prov.* 23.4. for all the gold and ſilver, and precious ſtones of this world will not make us happy; and if we should get never ſo much of this world, yet what will be our hope, though we have gained, when God taketh away aur ſoule? *Job* 27. 8. *Mark* 8. 36, 37, 38.

2. And ſeeing there is ſuch a pearle of great price prepared for us, and propoſed to us, and which may be injoyed by us in ſeeking for it, even a treaſure to be deſired, *Prov.* 21. 20. O! let us incline our eare, and come unto Chriſt, let us heare that our ſoules may live, *Iſay.* 55. this is a treaſure will make us happy in the injoyment; the merchandiſe of it is better then the merchandiſe of ſilver, and the gaine thereof then fine gold; she is more precious then rubies, and all the things thou canſt deſire are not to be compared to her: let us then ſeek her as ſilver, and ſearch for her as for hidden treaſure; and redeeme the time, and watch for and in all opportunities, that we may get Wiſdome, and with all our gettings get underſtanding, conſidering above all, that this gain is everlaſting. Hence the Wiſdome of God calls upon us to ſeek for her: Riches and honour are with me, yea durable riches, ad righteouſneſs I was ſet up from everlaſting now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children (ye ſons and daughters of men) for bleſſed are they that keep my ways: heare inſtruction and be wiſe, and refuſe it not bleſſed is the man that heareth

me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the poſts of my doores; for whoſo findeth me findeth life, and ſhall obtain favour of the Lord: But whoſo ſinneth againſt me wrongeth his owne ſoule; all they that hate me love death, *Prov.* 8. 18, 36. O Lord, open our eyes to ſee, and make us willing to behold the excellency of Wiſdome, that we may cry after her, and ſell all we have for the excellency of her, that we may win her, and retaine her, that at laſt we may know & compleatly injoy the happy gaine thereof, in being delivered for ever from ſorrow, and ſadneſs, and having everlaſting joy upon our heads. Amen. Amen.

February 25. 16$\frac{6}{7}$. *Coppied out June* 25. 1670.

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